RUSSIA'S CATACOMB SAINTS

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LIVES OF THE NEW MARTYRS

by Ivan Andreyev

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GLOSSARY
INDEX

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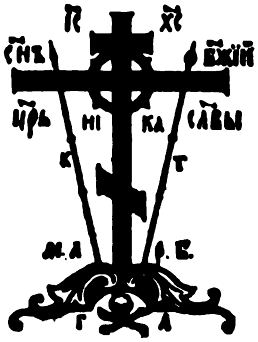
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This book is dedicated
to the Christian Martyrs

TODAY IN RUSSIA
TOMORROW IN AMERICA

Contents

Preface 11
Introduction 15
About the Author 23

I. The Catacomb Church

1. The Catacomb Church 43
2. Bishop Maxim
FIRST BISHOP OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH 52
3. Alexander Jacobson
NEW CONFESSOR OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL 69
4. The Nuns of Shamordino
AND THE MIRACLE OF THEIR MANLINESS 78
5. Matushka Maria of Gatchina
THE CONSOLING CATACOMB ELDRESS 85
6. Archbishop Dimitry of Gdov
AND HIS PRIEST NICHOLAS PROZOROV

II. The Founding Fathers and Their Documents

7. Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd
AND THE BEGINNING OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH 105
8. Bishop Hierotheus
AND HIS FRIEND SCHEMA-HIEROMONK SERAPHIM 130
9. Bishop Victor of Glazov
AND HIS TEACHING ON THE FREEDOM OF CHURCH 140
10. Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich
FORMER APOSTLE OF ALASKA AND AMERICA 151
11. Bishop Alexis Bui of Voronezh
AND THE BLESSED FOOL FOR CHRIST'S SAKE THEOKTISTA 162
12. Archbishop Pachomius of Chernigov
HIS BROTHER AVERCIUS AND THEIR EPISTLE 180

13. Archpriest Valentine
A PREACHER OF HESYCHASM IN THE WORLD 205

14. Bishop Damascene
BUILDER OF THE INVISIBLE CITY OF GOD 210

15. Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan
FIRST LOCUM TENENS OF PATRIARCH TIKHON 235

16. Archbishop Barlaam
HIS BROTHER-BISHOP HERMAN AND THEIR LETTERS 260

III. Russia's Catacomb Saints

17. Starets Anatole the Younger
AND THE LAST MONK-CONFESSORS OF OPTINA 293

18. Bishop Arcadius
SHEPHERD OF CATACOMB LAY BROTHERHOODS 312

19. Bishop Andrew
HIERARCH OF "THE CHURCH OF THE WILDERNESS" 321

20. The New Martyr Lydia
AND THE SOLDIERS CYRIL AND ALEXEI 329

21. The Young Father Vladimir
A NEW MIRACLE-WORKER OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH 334

22. Fathers Ismael and Michael
THE CATACOMB BROTHER-PRIESTS 340

23. Abbess Sophia of Kiev
CATACOMB ABBESS OF THE PROTECTION CONVENT 348

24. Schema-Bishop Macarius
AND THE HOLY NIGHT OF RUSSIAN MONASTICISM 358

25. Father Nicholas Zagorovsky
IN MONASTICISM HIEROMONK SERAPHIM 371

26. Bishop Onouphry
A SAINT OF KOLYMA AND MAGADAN 385

27. Priest-Martyr Elias
AND HIS MATUSHKA EUGENIA CHETVERUKHIN 404

28. Eldress Agatha of Belo-Russia
AND HER SERVICE TO THE CATACOMB CHURCH 417

29. Abbess Antonina
AND THE CAVE-DWELLERS IN THE CAUCASUS MOUNTAINS 433

30. The Sixty Priest-Martyrs
SLAIN IN THE TAIGA OF ACHUB-NIZHNE-UDINSK 442

31. Gregory the Cross-Bearer
THE NEW MARTYRS' FORETASTE OF PARADISE 445

IV. Sergianism As Seen From Within the Moscow Patriarchate 449
32. The Awakening of Conscience in the Moscow Patriarchate 451
33. Boris Talantov 453
34. Sergianism, the Leaven of Herod 463
35. Father Dimitry Dudko 487
36. Lev Regelson 491

V. The Catacomb Church in Recent Years 511
37. The Catacomb Epistle of 1962 513
38. Russia and the Church Today 523
39. Metropolitan Theodosius 544
40. The Catacomb Church, 1976 549
41. The Catacomb Church, 1979 552
42. Eugene Vagin 558

VI. Documents of the Russian Church Abroad Concerning the Catacomb Church 563
43. Epistle of Metropolitan Philaret 565
44. Resolution of the Sobor, 1971 572
45. Elder Tavrion, 1981 574

Appendix

I. Archbishop John of Latvia 578
II. Archbishop Leonty of Chile 596
Listing of New Martyrs 604
Sources 610
Glossary 626
Bibliography 635
Index 641

List of Illustrations

page 22 I. M. Andreyev
53 Bishop Maxim
54 Solovki Monastery and Prison
71 Alexander Jacobson
72 Solovki Prison
77 Solovki Monastery
89 Archbishop Dimitry of Gdov, icon
90 Archbishop Dimitry of Gdov
107 Metropolitan Joseph
108 Young Bishop Joseph
131 Bishop Hierotheus
132 Father Seraphim
137 Patriarch Tikhon
138 Metropolitan Vladimir
153 Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich
154 Archimandrite Seraphim in Alaska
163 Bishop Alexis Bui
164 Blessed Theoktista
181 Archbishop Pachomius
182 St. Theodosius' relics
191 Novice Basil and friends
192 Church of Christ the Saviour
233 Bishop Damascene and Abbess Sophia
234 Metropolitan Cyril
251 Metropolitan Cyril when old
252 Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa and the Council of 1917-1918
261 Archbishop Barlaam
262 Bishop Herman
264 Metropolitan Agathangelus
295 Elder Anatole of Optina
296 Sketch of Elder Anatole and Fr. Nikon
313 Bishop Arcadius
314 Bishop Stephan of the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra
323 Archimandrite Andrew
324 Bishop Andrew when old
331 New Martyr Lydia
335 The Young Father Vladimir
341 Fr. Ismael Rozhdestvensky
342 Fr. Michael Rozhdestvensky
349 Abbess Sophia
350 Convents of Holy Trinity and St. John the Almsgiver
355 Abbess Sophia in later years
356 Fr. Dimitry Ivanov
369 Schema-Bishop Macarius
370 Fr. Nicholas Zagarovsky
375 Fr. Nicholas Zagarovsky
376 Fr. Nicholas Masich and others
383 Bishop Onouphry
384 Bishop Onouphry in later years
419 Eldress Agatha
435 Abbess Antonina
454 Boris Talantov
579 Archbishop John of Latvia
580 Archbishop John during the Great Blessing of the water
597 Archbishop Leonty of Chile
598 Archbishop Leonty

Preface

And from the days of John the Baptist until now
the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and
the violent take it by force.
Matt. 11:12

He that hath ears to hear,
let him hear.
Matt. 11:15

The present book is an offering to the English-speaking reader from the deep experience of Orthodox Russia in the 20th century. This experience is one that has touched in some way almost every Orthodox Russian, whether in the homeland or in exile, but it is something that is almost impossible to communicate fully to those who have not known it at first hand.

While an attempt has been made in these pages to give also an outward history of the tragic events of Russian Church life in the 1920's and '30's, the main emphasis has been to present as directly as possible the actual testimony of the suffering Christians themselves. This testimony, which often lays bare an intense experience of life in Christ, is the best gift Orthodox Russia has to offer to the West. It will not prevent similar things from happening in the West—one can already feel them coming towards us—but it will help us to face the sufferings of our godless age with strength and true Christian conviction.

May this testimony serve to wake us up out of our sleep of self-satisfaction and all-too-often pretended (or at least untested) Christianity!

Although the whole book was inspired by Professor Andreyev, only Part I, strictly speaking, was actually written by him. For the rest the editor bears full responsibility.

Most of the material has been compiled from articles which have appeared at various times from 1965 to the present in the periodical *The Orthodox Word.* Therefore, some inconsistencies of style may well be noticed, in particular in the spelling of Christian names: sometimes the Russian form will be given, and sometimes the English equivalent. Here a few of these variant forms are given to alert the reader that they refer to one and the same name (the Russian name is given here first):

> Agafangel—Agathangelus; Alexey—Alexis; Averky—Abercius (Avercius); Damaskin—Damascene; Onouphry—Onuphrius; Sergy—Sergius; Vassily—Basil; Veniamin—Benjamin

The fact that almost all the material was written or translated before the glorification of the New Martyrs in 1981 also accounts for the fact that these New Martyrs are not called "Saint" in the text of the book—a title which is now given them by the believing Russian Church.

Abbot Herman
St. Herman of Alaska Monastery
Pascha, 1982

Act of Glorification of the New Martyrs of Russia

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, representing the only free part of the Russian Orthodox Church, with reverence discussed the exploit of the martyrdom and confession of the innumerable believers in the Russian land who have suffered from the hands of the godless—the persecutors of the Faith of Christ.

PREFACE

From the days of the Great Prince Vladimir, the Russian people with all its heart has accepted the holy Orthodox faith. This faith inspired numerous holy princes, hierarchs and ascetics, sanctifying the Christian order of Russian culture. These were founded on the Christian principles set forth in the Sacred Scripture and Tradition of the Orthodox Church. Being realized in Russian national life in various degrees in various periods of history, these principles have continued to exist in all layers of the Russian people, from the Tsar to the last pauper, for the course of more than 900 years. However, during the past two centuries, instigated by the enemy of our salvation, the antichristian principle of revolutionary atheism has directed all its strength and means towards the annihilation of these principles in the Russian people.

From 1917, beginning with the sin of the whole people in violating the oath, given before the Cross and the Gospel, of loyalty to Faith, Tsar, and Fatherland—there began to be put into practice the uprooting by the atheists of the whole Orthodox spirit in the government and in the people's way of life, both of which had turned away from God. This evil was attained by means of a cruel persecution of faith and of the Orthodox way of life; all layers of the population were made victims of this process, from the Tsar and the hierarchy to the simplest believers.

Right away, from the very beginning of the Revolution, there began a persecution and mockery of the imprisoned Tsar and his family and, almost simultaneously, an assault against the representatives of the Church: bishops, pastors, and believers. In the very first year of the Revolution our Church was made purple with the blood of the overthrown Tsar with all his family and the members of royal blood who were within the boundaries of Russia, as well as of numberless believers. Later, to them were joined the victims of persecutions from the renovationist schisms and the confessors who did not agree to any compromise with the antichristian authority in the attempt of the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate at that time to serve at one and the same time both Christ and Belial. An innumerable choir of many millions of martyrs and confessors was formed. During the 64 years of Soviet dominion tens of thousands of churches and monasteries were destroyed and millions of people were martyred because they preserved their Orthodox faith and did not bow down to the idol of materialism.

PREFACE

Bowing down in prayer before all of them, the Council of Bishops decrees that there should be joined to the choir of the saints all the martyrs and confessors who have suffered from the godless in Russia: hierarchs, clergy, monks, nuns, and all Orthodox people who have been tortured and killed for the Orthodox faith and the principles of Holy Russia.

The names of these saints are so numerous that they can be fully known only to the All-knowing God, and the Council of Bishops will have to supplement the list of names with those of other people who have struggled for the faith to the glory of God.

A special place in the choir of holy New Martyrs is occupied by the Tsar-martyr Nicholas II, as the anointed of God, the bearer of the idea of the Orthodox state, and his family. Therefore, a special service is to be dedicated to them on the day of their murder, the day of sorrow, July 4/17, together with the reading at the Liturgy of the prayer of repentance established earlier to be read at pannihidas.

To all these holy martyrs and confessors we shall offer praise, entreating them that by their intercession at the Throne of God they might obtain for Russia deliverance from the godless and a rebirth of Orthodox life, and that by their example they might inspire other children of the Russian Church also to enter on the path of struggle for faith and piety.

The general feast of the Russian New Martyrs and Confessors is to be celebrated on the Sunday between the 22nd and 28th of January, according to the Orthodox (Old) Calendar. The memory of separate martyrs and confessors should be performed on the day of their blessed repose, when it is known, and otherwise on the day of the general feast of the New Martyrs.

Chairman of the Council of Bishops
†Metropolitan Philaret
and Members of the Council.

Introduction

ON JULY 16/29, 1927, Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, the then acting Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne of Moscow, issued his infamous "Declaration" of the loyalty of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Soviet government and solidarity with its "joys" and "sorrows." This document was published in the official Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* on August 6/19 of the same year, and was the overt cause of the fundamental division which occurred then in the Russian Church and has lasted up to the present day. In the words of a church historian of this period (himself a "Sergianist"), the year of the Declaration was "a turning point. Up until now the whole life of the church proceeds under the sign of this year" (A. Krasnov-Levitin, *Memoirs*, YMCA Press, 1977, p. 91, in Russian).

This division is not merely one between two totally independent church organizations (though it is that also); more basically it is a division between two entirely different views of what the Church of Christ is and how it should act in this sinful world while conducting its children to the banks of the eternal sinless life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

One view, that of the present-day Moscow Patriarchate, to which the name of "Sergianism" has been most fittingly applied, sees the Church first of all as an *organization* whose outward form must be preserved at any cost; disobedience to or separation from this organization is regarded as an act of "schism" or even "sectarianism." The apologists for Sergianism, both within and outside Russia, continually emphasize that Metropolitan Sergius' policy "preserved" the hierarchy, the church organization, the church services, the possibility of receiving the Holy Mysteries, and that this is the chief business of the church or even its whole reason for existing. Such apologies, products of the general decline of the Orthodox church consciousness in our times, are themselves symptoms of the ecclesiastical disease of Sergianism, of the loss of contact with the spiritual roots of Orthodox Christianity and the replacement of *living and whole Orthodoxy* by outward and "canonical" forms. This mentality is perhaps the chief cause for the spread of Protestant sects in present-day Russia: the mere semblance of the primacy of spiritual concerns (even if devoid of true Christian content) is enough to overwhelm the mere attachment to outward forms among many millions of Russians who are convinced that the Sergianist church (because it is the only one visible) *is* Orthodoxy.

The other view, that of the True-Orthodox or Catacomb Church of Russia, sees the first responsibility of the Orthodox Church to be *faithfulness to Christ and to the true Spirit of Orthodoxy*, at whatever external cost. This mentality does not at all disdain external forms; we know that the Catacomb Church has preserved the Divine services and the church hierarchy down to our own day. The external cost of the Catacomb Church's faithfulness to true Orthodoxy has been the loss of immediate influence over the masses of the Russian people, many of whom do not even know of its existence and the majority of whom would not know where or how to enter into contact with its members. But the loss of outward influence has as its counterpart a moral and spiritual authority which cannot be appreciated by those who judge these matters outwardly, but which will become evident when freedom returns to Russia.

The mentality of the Catacomb Church in the USSR is best described in the words of its own members. Here is how I. M. Andreyev, an active participant in the church events of1927 and later, describes the formation of the Catacomb Church in those years.

"According to the testimony of the close friend of Patriarch Tikhon, the professor and doctor of medicine M. A. Zhizhilenko (the former chief physician of the Taganka prison in Moscow), the Patriarch, not long before his death, becoming convinced, with great fear, that the boundary of the 'political' demands of the Soviet regime would go beyond the boundaries of faithfulness to the

Church and Christ, expressed the idea that probably the only way for the Orthodox Russian Church to preserve faithfulness to Christ would be, in the near future, to *go into the catacombs.* Therefore, Patriarch Tikhon blessed Prof. Zhizhilenko to accept secret monasticism, and then, in the near future, in case the leading hierarchs of the Church should betray Christ and give over to the Soviet regime the spiritual freedom of the Church, to become a secret bishop.

"In 1927, when Metropolitan Sergius issued his Declaration, after which the church schism occurred, Prof. Zhizhilenko fulfilled the will of Patriarch Tikhon and became the first secret catacomb bishop, Maxim of Serpukhov.

"After the schism of 1927, the followers of Metropolitan Sergius, who accepted his Declaration, began to be called 'Sergianists,' while those who remained faithful to the Orthodox Church, who did not accept the Declaration and separated from Metropolitan Sergius, began to be called 'Josephites' (after Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd). This latter name, given by the 'Sergianists,' did not define the position, either in essence or formally, of those who protested. Apart from Metropolitan Joseph, other hierarchs, the most outstanding ones, together with their flocks, departed from communion with Metropolitan Sergius. The religious-moral authority of those who protested and separated was so high, and their qualitative superiority was so clear, that for the future historian of the Church there can be no doubt whatever of the correctness of the opponents of Metropolitan Sergius. These latter could more correctly be called faithful 'Tikhonites.' And the activities of Metropolitan Sergius and those with him must be characterized as a *neo-renovationist schism.*

"All those who protested against the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius were arrested by the Soviet regime as 'counter-revolutionaries'; they were shot or sent to concentration camps and exile. At interrogations the jubilant Chekist-interrogators with sarcasm and evil joy would prove the 'strict canonicity' of Metropolitan Sergius and his Declaration, which 'has not altered either canons or dogmas.' The mass executions, persecutions and tortures which descended upon the faithful of Christs' Church are beyond description.

"For the True Orthodox Church there was left no alternative but to *go into the catacombs.*

"The spiritual father who gave birth to the very idea of the Catacomb Church was Patriarch Tikhon. In the first years of its existence the Catacomb Church had neither organization nor administration, was dispersed physically and geographically, and was united only by the name of Metropolitan Peter. The first Catacomb bishop Maxim was arrested in 1928 and sent to the Solovki concentration camp; in 1930 he was sent from the camp to Moscow and shot.

"Beginning in 1928 in the Solovki and Svir concentration camps, in the 'Belbaltlag' camp, and in many camps in Siberia, there began to be performed many secret ordinations. (In the Solovki camp, where I was, these were performed by Bishops Maxim, Victor, Hilarion, and Nectary.)

"After the death of Metropolitans Peter and Cyril (both died in exile in 1936), the spiritual and administrative head of the Catacomb Church — which by this time had achieved a certain degree of organization — became Metropolitan Joseph (even though he was in exile).

"At the end of 1938, precisely for his leadership and guidance of the secret Catacomb Church, Metropolitan Joseph was executed.

"After his death, the Catacomb Church began yet more strictly to keep its secrets, especially the names and locations of its spiritual leaders.

"*I will not speak of the mystery to Thy enemies* — it is with such a motto that brief information has appeared from time to time on the life of this secret Church." (I. M. Andreyev, *Brief Review of the History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to our Days,* Jordanville, 1951, pp. 70-72.)

There exists a mass of materials documenting this early period in the history of the Catacomb Church, both in the epistles of bishops and others who separated from Metropolitan Sergius, and in the memoirs and other accounts of individual members of the Catacomb Church who escaped from the Soviet Union during World War II. Many of these documents are contained in the two volumes of *Russia's New Martyrs,* compiled by Archpriest Michael Polsky (Jordanville, 1949 and 1957); the most important of these, and a number from other sources, are presented in Parts II and III of this book, most of them for the first time in English.

On the eve of World War II, the persecution of religion in the Soviet Union reached its fiercest peak, when even the "Sergianist" church organization came near to liquidation, and the Catacomb Church disappeared entirely from view. Only a few of the most notable collaborators with the Soviets, such as Metropolitan Sergius himself, escaped imprisonment or banishment, a fact which led to the charge of Boris Talantov thirty years later that "Metropolitan Sergius by his adaptation and lies saved no one and nothing, except his own person."

INTRODUCTION

When Stalin, in order to take advantage of the patriotic and religious feelings of the Russian people in the war against the Germans, opened a number of the closed churches and allowed the election of a "Patriarch" in 1943, a new period began in Church-State relations, when the Moscow Patriarchate became, in effect, the "State Church" of the Soviet government, spreading Communist propaganda throughout the world in the name of religion, and categorically denying the existence of any religious persecution whatever in the Soviet Union. The mere existence of a Catacomb Orthodox Church opposed to this policy, of course, could have a disastrous effect on the policy, especially if it became widely known abroad. All groups of Catacomb Orthodox were mercilessly uprooted by the Soviet authorities when discovered, and their members were given long prison terms. Most of the little information we have from this period of the history of the Catacomb Church in Russia comes from the Soviet press; but almost nothing is known to this day about the organization and leadership of the Catacomb Church during this time.

Under Khrushchev in 1959 a new and intense persecution of religion was undertaken in the USSR, inaugurating the most recent period of Russian church history, a period in which the Sergianist puppet church organization is itself being used to liquidate Orthodoxy in Russia, while continuing its Communist propaganda abroad and its now totally incredible assertions of the absence of any persecution of religion in the USSR. A majority of the remaining Sergianist churches, monasteries, and seminaries have been closed in this period, and an especially fierce persecution has been conducted against "unregistered" church bodies such as the Catacomb Orthodox Church, which is known to the Soviet authorities under the names of "Josephites," "Tikhonites," and the "True-Orthodox Church." The persecution was especially fierce in the years 1959-1964; since the downfall of Khrushchev it has been less intense, but it continues all the same, especially against the "unregistered" bodies.

In this most recent period a new spirit of boldness has entered church life in Russia; this, coupled with a greatly increased freedom of communication between the USSR and the free world, has produced what, beginning with a few isolated protests in the early 1960's, has now become a wave of protest and indignation from believers in Russia directed against the religious persecutions of the Soviet government and the spineless apologies for it of the official church organization. The Open Letter to Patriarch Alexis of the Moscow priests Gleb Yakunin and Nicholas Eshliman in 1965, the articles on "Sergianism" by Boris

Talantov in 1968, the righteous protests against the church policy of the Moscow Patriarchate from Orthodox Christians as diverse as Archbishop Ermogen and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and most recently the desperate cries of conscience of Father Dimitry Dudko and the new church history of Lev Regelson (who has given the first sympathetic account of the "Josephites" from within the Moscow Patriarchate) — have led to a veritable "crisis of Sergianism" in Russia; the chief factor, it would seem, that now prevents a new break with the Moscow Patriarchate on the scale of the "Josephite" movement of 1927 is a certain fear of the specter of "schism" and "sectarianism," coupled with a widespread ignorance of the actual state and mentality of the present-day Caacomb Church. The most striking testimonies regarding the meaning of "Sergianism" from within the Moscow Patriarchate today are included in Part IV of this book.

Finally, the past few years, beginning with the death of Patriarch Alexis in 1971, have seen a certain re-emergence of the Catacomb Church itself in Russia. In particular, the two "catacomb documents" of 1971 have given us the first real view in forty years of the *mentality* of the present-day Catacomb Church, which would seem to be quite sober and not at all 'sectarian" or "fanatical" (an impression which is only reinforced by the just-printed catacomb epistle of 1962, the very existence of which was known up to now only by a few people in the Soviet Union); the testimony of A. Krasnov-Levitin after his exile from the Soviet Union in 1974 has provided us the first real information since 1938 concerning *the episcopate and the chief hierarch* of the Catacomb Church; and the information from the Soviet press in 1976 concerning the trial of Archimandrite Gennady is the most striking evidence since before World War II of the actual *activity* of the Catacomb Church and its astonishing scope. These documents are contained in Part V of this book.

This book should not be regarded as a mere "apology" for the Catacomb Church; our attempt has been to be a little more "objective" than that. In fact, the present historical moment, just after the 50th anniversary of the "Declaration" that divided Russian Orthodoxy in the 20th century, offers an unparalleled opportunity for an "objective" view of the past half-century of church life for us who belong to the only free and uncompromised part of the Russian Church. The soul of Russia is speaking today, more clearly than at any time since the beginning of Sergianism; but the pain and difficulty of speaking make it almost impossible for those inside the Soviet Union to understand the message fully. In particular, those within the Moscow Patriarchate find themselves still enclosed in an "enchanted circle" of inherited opinions about the church organization, which will probably not be broken until the realization finally dawns upon them that the Catacomb Church of Russia is not primarily a rival "church organization" which demands a change of episcopal allegiance, but is first of all the standard-bearer of *faithfulness to Christ*, which inspires a different attitude towards the Church and its organization than now prevails throughout much of the Orthodox world. This realization will perhaps not dawn until the downfall of the godless regime; but when it does, the Sergianist church organization and its whole philosophy of being will crumble to dust. In this light, it is surely no exaggeration to say that the future of Russia, if it is to be Orthodox, belongs to the Catacomb Church.

A deliberate attempt has been made, in the appendix to this volume where the sources for the history of the Catacomb Church are presented, to indicate the "bias" of the authors, whether "Sergianist" or "Josephite." There have, of course, been exaggerations on both sides. To the future historian of the Russian Church there will indeed be no doubt (in fact, the church history of Lev Regelson already proves it) that the Josephites were correct and the Sergianists were fatally wrong. But the significance of the Catacomb Church does not lie in its "correctness"; it lies in its preservation of *the true spirit of Orthodoxy,* the spirit of freedom in Christ. Sergianism was not merely "wrong" in its choice of church policy, it was something far worse: it was a betrayal of Christ based on agreement with the spirit of this world. It is the inevitable result when church policy is guided by earthly logic and not by the mind of Christ.

I.M.Andreyev

TRUE ORTHODOX CONVERT FROM THE RUSSIAN INTELLIGENTSIA

AT THE DAWN of the 20th century, the Russian intellectual class — the intelligentsia — had wandered far from the Orthodox Christian roots of Russian life. The promising beginnings in the mid-19th century of a genuine Orthodox philosophy able to meet the challenge of Western ideas (Kireyevsky, Khomiakov) had few followers. With a few exceptions (such as Constantine Leontiev) the Russian intelligentsia in the second half of the 19th century went far away from the Orthodox Church, turning ever more to Western revolutionary ideas, ending in materialism and Marxism.

The natural reaction against this materialism in the late 19th century did not take an Orthodox form. The powerful religious philosophy of Vladimir Soloviev influenced many to return to religion of a sort — but to a "free" religion, not the Orthodoxy of Byzantine and Russian tradition. As a result, the Russian religious "renaissance" of the early 20th century was remote from Orthodoxy; it was a current of religious "freethinking" that prepared the ground for "renovationism" in Russia and for religious "liberalism" and outright heresy in the Diaspora.

In many minds the impression remains that the Russian intelligentsia, even when religious, is basically free-thinking, modernist, renovationist, even when its members join the ranks of the Orthodox clergy, while they are opposed only by "narrow church circles" which have no "creativity," but simply preserve the church tradition of the past without any answer to the "problems of the time."

Such an over-simplified view does not do justice to the integrity of the genuine bearers of tradition, who transmit the Orthodox patristic philosophy of life without the great crises and "conversions" and fanfare of the intelligentsia, and perform indeed a difficult and creative task in living and transmitting it against all the attacks of the modern world; nor does it pay sufficient attention to those members of the intelligentsia whose conversion from materialism and Western ideas is *complete* and not partial, and who therefore become part of the preservers of tradition and cease being a part of the rebellious intelligentsia.

These latter "converts" are invariably and especially disowned by the liberal intelligentsia, and their views are not seen as worthy of respect. But their experience of philosophical and spiritual growth is of great value, whether for younger Russians or Western converts whose experience in our times (so hostile to tradition) is much closer to theirs than to those who never rebelled. One such convert, an inspiring example for our times, was I. M. Andreyev, whose conversion and spiritual growth can be followed for the most part in excerpts from his own writings.

IVAN MIKHAILOVICH ANDREYEVSKY (Andreyev being his literary pseudonym) was born on March 14, 1894, of well-to-do parents in St. Petersburg and attended secondary schools in that city. He had at least one brother and one sister (the poetess Maria Shkapskaya). He evidently was raised in Orthodox piety (he twice had contact with St. John of Kronstadt), but in late adolescence he entered a period of "rebellion." His outlook at the end of his secondary schooling may be seen in the following account by someone who knew him then, Nicholas Sergeev (private letter of February 7, 1977):

"Ivan Mikhailovich came to the sixth class of the Vyedensky Gymnasia in 1911-12; where he had been before that I don't know. He sat two seats away from me; he was a serious boy, never joked, was a fairly good student . . . I sang in the choir of our house church, but I never saw I. M. in church. In the seventh class, I believe in November, 1912, we were all thunderstruck when we found out from the newspapers that a revolutionary group had been discovered (in our school and in the Wideman Gymnasia) — I.M. and a student of the class ahead of him, in whose room a mimeograph machine and proclamations had been found (the latter killed himself). We didn't see I. M. in the Gymnasia after that. I can only write what was said: there was a trial; the participants of the group were taken under the protection of the millionaire Shacht and sent to study in Switzerland."

The beginning of Andreyev's intellectual and spiritual path, therefore, is clear: he was an unchurchly, deadly-serious, revolutionary-minded youth, such as were common in the Russia of the early 20th century.

Apparently he finished his secondary schooling in Switzerland, and we next hear of him in Paris. "In 1914 I was a young student of the Philosophy Department of the Sorbonne, and I had the right of attending lectures at the College-de-France. There I listened to Lalande and Bergson." He also attended the lectures of Emile Durkheim, Levy-Bruel, and other noted philosophers and scientists of that time, and completed his studies in the department of philosophy at the Sorbonne. Most of all he was under the influence of Bergson: "Bergson lectured with inspiration, improvised, thought out loud, created on the lecture platform, and ruled the minds of the young generation, especially of Russians. I was among the latter." ("The Path of Prof. S. A. Askoldov," in *Orthodox Way* for 1955, Jordanville, p. 55; all sources translated from Russian.)

Here again it is not difficult to understand the course of Andreyev's intellectual growth. The young "revolutionary," broadened by exposure to some of the leading scientific and philosophical minds of Europe, made the same jump "from Marxism to idealism" that was then being made by Bulgakov, Berdayev, and other famous members of the Russian intelligentsia. The philosophy of Bergson was a reaction against 19th-century materialism and atheism which strove to attain some higher reality by means of "intuition," making use of the then fashionable scientific philosophy in order to create a new philosophy of "creative evolution," where in the world is viewed as a reality constantly changing, constantly being created, constantly striving towards something beyond itself. "God" Himself, according to Bergson, is constantly moving and changing, and the "worlds" He creates are in a constant process of "evolution," lower beings being transformed into higher with virtually no limit to the upward surge of this irreversible process: "There is a center from which worlds shoot out like rockets in a fireworks display . . . God, thus defined, has nothing of the already-made; he is unceasing life, action, freedom . . . All the living hold together, and all yield to the same tremendous push. The animal takes its stand on the plant, man bestrides animality and the whole of humanity, in space and in time, is one immense army galloping beside and before and behind each of us in an overwhelming charge able to beat down every resistance, and clear the most formidable obstacles, perhaps even death" (Bergson, *Creative Evolution).* Such a philosophy must have been alluring indeed to a 20-year-old "philosopher," just awakened to the insufficiency of a materialistic philosophy and the utter stupidity of atheism, but not yet ready to see any other way out of the crisis of modern European philosophy than a vague and romantic irrationalism. The philosophy of Bergson did not leave a deep trace on the mature world-view of Andreyev; it was, rather, an important stage in his assimilation of the best of modern "wisdom," which enabled him later to be a brilliant apologist for the higher wisdom of Orthodoxy. His older contemporary, Berdayev, never left this immature stage of "romantic idealism"; but Andreyev advanced, one step at a time, along a path that was to take him to true orthodoxy.

It was Bergson who introduced Andreyev to a more mature philosopher than himself. In Andreyev's own words: "Once, after one of his inspired lectures, brilliant in form, Bergson asked those who surrounded him in the corridor: who, in their opinion, was the most remarkable thinker in the world at the present time? Seeing the perplexity of his listeners, he clearly and distinctly said: 'It is a modest Russian philosopher, *Askoldov* by name.' It was extremely flattering for me, a Russian student, to hear such an opinion about a Russian philosopher; but to my shame I had to acknowledge that I heard the name of Askoldov then for the first time and knew absolutely nothing about him" *(Ibid.* p. 55). A few years later he was to meet this remarkable and little-known Russian philosopher and become his disciple.

Andreyev returned to Russia after the outbreak of the Revolution, already much changed from when he had left. He was no longer under the spell of revolutionary ideas and took no part in the Revolution that swirled about him. He took up advanced studies in medicine and psychiatry at the Bekhterev Institute in Petrograd, and these studies also served for his intellectual and philosophical development. Later he was to say: "I came to God through science," and this statement well reveals his spiritual life's path: through a burning love for truth (as opposed to the opinions and prejudices that often usurp the name of science), he came finally to the Truth itself.

In the first years of the Soviet regime he was also studying literature at Petersburg University; indeed, his interest in psychiatry had originally been aroused by the depths of the human soul which he had found revealed in the novels of Dostoyevsky. In literature also he was seeking *truth* first and foremost.

The intellectual vigor and depth of Andreyev's student years are truly astonishing. Obviously a man of genius, he received in these years three doctorates: in medicine, literature, and philosophy; a few years later he was to add a fourth: in theology.

Philosophically, Andreyev came at this time under the influence of N. Lossky, one of the most renowned Russian philosophers of the time, an "idealist" and "intuitionist" (but rather "liberal" in his Orthodoxy) who brought Andreyev a little closer to his own Orthodox roots. But the most important event in his intellectual life was his meeting, at Petersburg University in 1919, with S. A. Askoldov, the Russian philosopher who had been pointed out to him in Paris by Bergson.

The nature of the influence of Askoldov upon Andreyev cannot be understood by reference to the pitiable academic world of today, which is oriented to the passing down of *fragmented* knowledge and opinions and not a *wholeness* of world-view. "For the first time after Bergson," writes Andreyev, "I experienced the spiritual awe of contact with a man of genius. I felt that I had found, at last, a real teacher" (*Ibid*, p. 56). "I learned from him true philosophizing" *(Outlines of the History of Russian Literature*, p. 305). Askoldov taught him much about philosophy and introduced him to his own philosopher-friends, such as Fr. Paul Florensky and Fr. Theodore Andreyev; but more importantly, Andreyev absorbed from his teacher a whole *attitude* of mind and soul which was just what he needed for his own further intellectual and spiritual growth. "Everything I came to know of what Askoldov had written produced on me an exceptionally powerful impression, because it directly and clearly answered to the deepest questions of my spirit" *(Orthodox Way*, 1950, p. 57).

Askoldov had a constant "will for righteousness and truth . . . Intellectual dishonesty always evoked in him an explosion of dissatisfaction" *(Ibid.*, p. 62). Andreyev himself inherited from his teacher this intellectual uprightness that could not tolerate the slightest dishonesty or fakery, whether in philosophy or church life.

From Askoldov, Andreyev also learned of the often complex organic relationship between good and evil, and of the necessity to choose in real life "primary good" even if it is joined to a "secondary evil." For example, the political and social order of Imperial Russia was a primary good (because founded on God and Orthodoxy) joined to secondary evils (moral defects of some of its representatives, social injustices, etc., while the Revolution even at its best offered a secondary good (the correction of injustices) joined to a primary evil (the overthrow of the God-ordained order, the installation of atheism). This is the key also, in Askoldov's view, to understanding Antichrist, who will seem "good" to those who have lost the Christian hierarchy of values and do not see the warfare against Christ and His Church hidden beneath his mask of "humanitarianism."

Askoldov opened up to Andreyev the possibility for a modern man to believe in miracles and the immortality of the soul, and gave him "the key to a true understanding of contemporary world events: the recognition of our times as apocalyptic" *(Ibid.*, p. 64). When reminded of the "mistakes" of those Christian thinkers in the past who thought their times also were apocalyptic, "Askoldov would usually reply that they had not been mistaken then; and he would give an example: It happens that people are near death, and this is known and felt by them, as also by the physicians who are treating them and by their close relatives. But then such a man suddenly recovers. One cannot say that he had not been near death; he *had* been near death, but then recovered. So also the world has been several times near death, and those who are sensitive in religious matters have felt it, and there was no mistake in this. So also now: the world is 'near death'" *(Ibid.*, p. 64).

Askoldov further influenced Andreyev in religious ways by his "religious outlook of soul, thirst for purity, and gift of contrite tears of repentance" *(Orthodox Way*, 1950, p. 61). Once, during the Second World War, when the two were together in a small wooden house and had nowhere to flee during a fierce bombardment, Andreyev was astonished when Askoldov, in the absence of a priest, asked permission to confess his sins to him in the face of death. "I will never forget this confession: a more sincere repentance would be difficult to imagine" *(loc. cit.)*.

In a word, Askoldov brought Andreyev, through his intellectual, moral and religious influence, to the threshold of a true Orthodox Christian consciousness. But soon the disciple was to outgrow the teacher. Askoldov, although Orthodox in religion, had some heretical views, and Andreyev began to argue with him over them, trying to persuade his teacher to become *fully* Orthodox and not hold to his mistaken views. The profound love and friendship of these two men, who were to share years of Soviet life, exile and war together, produced its most touching fruit on the deathbed of Askoldov in Germany in 1945, from where he wrote Andreyev that he had finally decided to burn his work "On Reincarnation," having become fully reconciled with everything churchly, largely under Andreyev's influence *(Ibid.*, p. 60).

It was Askoldov who introduced Andreyev to the first of the more strictly "churchly" influences in his intellectual and spiritual life: Professor (later Priest) Theodore K. Andreyev, whose surname he was to take as his own out of his great respect for him. Andreyev thus writes of his first impression of this brilliant young professor: "In 1921-22 Prof. T. K. Andreyev would sometimes give lectures or, more frequently, debates. Especially striking was his talk at the 'Home of Scientists,' in the discussion after the lecture of Prof. N. O. Lossky in 1921, 'On the Nature of the Satanic,' when the young professor, with immense feeling and broad erudition, censured the renowned philosopher Lossky, reading as it were a counter-lecture on the theme of 'The Origin of Evil' " (Fr. M. Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs,* Jordanville, 1957, vol. II, p. 134). This was perhaps the first clear clash which Andreyev had witnessed in his mature years between the wisdom of this world, which he had been pursuing up until then, and the Church's wisdom, which now began to conquer his mind and soul.

Later, in 1924, after serving briefly as a psychiatrist at the Nikolaevsky Military Hospital, as a professor at Petersburg University, and as a literature instructor in a Petrograd high school, Andreyev was living in a sanitorium near Tsarskoye Selo (sharing a room with Askoldov), where many of the residents were spiritual children of the newly-ordained Father Theodore Andreyev. Here frequent religious and philosophical discussions were held, and Fr. Theodore himself (and Andreyev after him) was noticeably maturing in the strictly Orthodox side of his philosophy, finding his former professor and friend, Father Paul Florensky, to be rather un-Orthodox and even in a refined state of spiritual deception. Father Theodore taught Dogmatic Theology and Liturgics in the "Pastoral Courses" which had been set up in Petrograd by a number of theology professors as an answer to the two other theological schools remaining in the city, a "renovated" and a "liberal" theological institute. Andreyev studied in this actual "theological academy" from 1924 to 1928 and here received his "catacomb" theological degree. A further church influence on Andreyev at this time was Fr. Sergei Tikomirov, spiritual father both of him and of Askoldov; he was a frequent visitor of Optina Monastery and had spiritual contact with its elders. In these years also, beginning after both Andreyev and Askoldov had lost their professorships in the University and were teaching in technical and high schools, the two began to form religious-philosophical groups with the best of their students, sharing with them their maturing Orthodox world-view, books from their library, and their enthusiasm for important religious questions. Out of these groups was formed, in 1926, a "Brotherhood of St. Seraphim of Sarov" — an indication of the direction in which their religious growth was taking them.

By 1926 Andreyev had read a number of Orthodox patristic sources, under whose influence he came to intellectual maturity in Orthodoxy, and had visited a number of Orthodox monasteries, where he saw true Orthodoxy in practice. "Bergson, Lossky, Askoldov: these are the three stages of my philosophical development — philosophical, but not religious. On the latter path I had entirely different teachers: Bishop Theophan the Recluse, Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, the Optina Elders, and the ever-memorable Father John of Kronstadt — and then the Philocalia, and, in general, Orthodox patristic literature. With Optina Elder Nectarius I engaged in a long correspondence, and with Elder Dositheus I was in personal contact. Twice I had had personal contact with Father John of Kronstadt also. Being taught by them the strictly Orthodox spiritual method (if one can thus express oneself), I made it secure by means of unforgettable impressions of visits to remarkable Russian monasteries (Valaam, Solovki, the Kiev Caves Lavra, Sarov, Diveyevo, Optina Monastery, and others). As a result, the choice became clear to me between the conservative Orthodoxy of Father John of Kronstadt and the 'modernized' Orthodoxy of V. Soloviev and his school. Without wavering, I chose the former path" *(Outlines of the History of Russian Literature*, p. 304).

Having come to true Orthodoxy, Andreyev finally, on a pilgrimage to St. Seraphim's Diveyevo Convent, had an experience which he describes as his "spiritual birth." It was the custom for pilgrims to Diveyevo to remain at least

24 hours in the Convent and perform there the "rule" laid down by St. Seraphim himself: to walk three times around the "canal" of the Mother of God (the path around the Convent), saying a special rule of prayer by prayer-rope, praying for all one's relations and close ones, and at the end expressing one's most heartfelt, most needed desire, which would unfailingly be granted, according to one's prayer. Andreyev thus describes his experience:

"When, at the end of my third circuit of the 'canal', having performed the whole rule, I wished to express my heartfelt desires, something miraculous occurred to me, evidently by the great mercy of St. Seraphim. I was suddenly gripped by an entirely special, quiet, warm, and fragrant joy — an undoubting conviction with my whole being of the existence of God and of an entirely real communion in prayer with Him. And it became entirely evident and clear to me that any request for anything earthly would be equal to the prayer: Lord, depart from me and deprive me of Thy wondrous gift . . . And inwardly I fervently addressed God, 'O Lord, give me nothing, *take away* from me all earthly prosperity, but only do not deprive me of the joy of communion with Thee, or, if it is impossible to preserve this always in our life, then grant me remembrance of heart, grant me the possibility of preserving to death the remembrance of this present blessed minute of the sensing of Thy Holy Spirit!'

"The next day we went to Sarov. We venerated the relics of St. Seraphim with great emotion, with spiritual fear and reverence. I sensed that I had been spiritually born the preceding day at Diveyevo. Everything had become new within me. Previously I had not understood such a simple truth, that spiritual things are more distinct from those of the soul than the latter from bodily things. But now I understood this all well. Within, in the depths of my soul, it was quiet, calm, joyful. The outward miracles at the shrine of St. Seraphim, which occured before my eyes, did not astonish me. All this seemed simple and natural . . .

"My whole life after my pilgrimage to Sarov Monastery changed. The Lord took away from me, in accordance with my prayer at the canal, all earthly goods, but He preserved forever in me the remembrance of that moment when, in His limitless kindness, by the mercy of the Most Holy Mother of God and the prayers of St. Seraphim, I, a sinner, totally undeservedly, was vouchsafed to experience in myself the quiet, joyful, gentle and fragrant wafting of the Holy Spirit of the Lord" ("A Pilgrimage to Sarov and Diveyevo in 1926," in *Orthodox Way*, 1953, pp. 20-21, 25).

Thus did Andreyev, after his *intellectual* maturity, come to *spiritual* maturity. He himself was later to describe to his students these years of his intellectual and spiritual formation as his full growth from "body" (science, medicine) to "soul" (literature, philosophy) to "spirit" (theology, true Orthodoxy), using the threefold division of the human personality discussed by St. Seraphim, Bishop Theophan the Recluse, and many other Fathers, on the basis of the words of St. Paul (I Cor. 2:14-15, etc.). By "spirit," of course, is not meant a separate *component* of man's nature, as some heretics have taught, but only the higher part of the soul, where contact with God and the spiritual world is opened up, as opposed to the lower part of the soul, which is occupied with the normal human pursuits of art and science, philosophy and culture. The awareness — in first-hand experience — of this critical distinction between soul and spirit was later to give to his teaching a depth and preciseness which few philosophers and thinkers attain.

In 1926 Andreyev reached philosophical and religious maturity; in 1927 his period of testing began. In the latter year Metropolitan Sergius issued his infamous "Declaration," and the Orthodox faithful were divided into two camps. Andreyev, together wih most of those in his circle of friends — Askoldov, Fr. Theodore Andreyev, Fr. Sergei Tikhomirov, even Fr. Paul Florensky — protested the "Declaration" and joined the opposition to it, out of which was formed the present-day Catacomb Church. In this critical choice the soundness and rightness of Andreyev's spiritual formation was confirmed.

Andreyev's activities in first protesting the "Declaration" and then suffering imprisonment (at Solovki from 1929-31) and banishment for his religious views, are described in some of his articles which are printed below. During the 1930's he was an active participant in the Catacomb "Josephite" movement while serving as a physician and psychiatrist wherever he was able to do so; it is known that he attended the catacomb services of Father Ismael Rozhdectvensky and was his spiritual son for a while. Just before the Second World War he was chief physician of the Regional Psychiatric Hospital in Novgorod. When the Germans advanced he found himself in the occupied zone, and when they retreated he went to Germany, settling finally (in 1950) at Holy Trinity Monastery near Jordanville, New York. Here he joined the faculty of Holy Trinity Seminary, which during his time (the 1950's and 1960's) included some of the most remarkable minds of the Russian Diaspora, who were indeed a group of tradition-minded Orthodox thinkers without rival in the whole Orthodox world for the depth and refinement of their thought in theology, philosophy, and literature, and for the wholeness and balance of their view of the present-day church situation. (Apart from the two theologian-rectors, Archbishops Vitaly and Averky, one may name Archimandrite Constantine, Fr. M. Pomazansky, I. M. Kontzevitch, N. Talberg, and others.)

Unfortunately, owing precisely to the lack of depth and refinement among Orthodox Christians in general today, and also to the ingrained modesty and humility of these superb products of genuine Orthodox tradition, these Orthodox thinkers, Andreyev among them, have seldom been appreciated at their full value, and even those who have lived and studied in their midst have too seldom realized what treasures they could have mined from their wealth of Orthodox knowledge and experience. Their spiritual and intellectual maturity, their old-world refinement, their subtle art of understatement, the complexity yet wholeness of their Orthodox world-view — all this has largely gone over the heads of a younger generation (whether Russian, Greek, or convert) that too often seeks easy answers to over-simplified questions, that is so easily scandalized by slight flaws that it misses the whole point of a profoundly Orthodox life's work, whose spiritual immaturity and lack of intellectual culture simply cannot follow the thought-processes of a mature Orthodox thinker, whose lack of artistic and literary sensitivity can lead to false spirituality, making one unaware of the elements of the lower part of "soul" which can usurp the higher place of the "spirit" if one is not trained to distinguish them, whose deficiency in *Orthodox feeling* renders it blind to the Orthodox giants in its midst. We all suffer from this. All the more, then, must we strive to understand these giants who have now all but departed, leaving all would-be defenders of Orthodoxy in a very precarious position against the increasingly subtle temptations of an anti-Christian age. Without a broadening and deepening of our *Orthodox world-view*, without absorbing at least something of the genuine Orthodox teaching of the great men who have handed down Orthodoxy to us — we will scarcely survive.

Archbishop Vitaly of Jordanville highly valued Andreyev as an Orthodox confessor and thinker; on numerous occasions he blessed him to put on the church-server's sticharion and give sermons in the monastery church. His students remember him as a very enthusiastic, eloquent, and inspiring lecturer (on the

Sorbonne level rather than the usual seminary level!), teaching subjects in which he wholeheartedly believed and to which he was thoroughly committed. He was absolutely intolerant only of one thing: fakery, whether in spiritual or intellectual life.

In America, Andreyev was an active participant in church life as well as in scholarly and scientific societies. He was a director of and regularly gave addresses on medical subjects to the Pirogov Society (an organization of Russian physicians in the United States) and participated. in and gave lectures to the Pushkin literary society. Outside the Seminary, his most beloved church work was bound up with the St. Vladimir Society, founded by Archbishop Vitaly with the aims of building a St. Vladimir Memorial Church in Cassville, New Jersey (where he is now buried) before the thousandth anniversary of Russia's Baptism (1988), and constantly reminding Russians in America of their Orthodox roots in Holy Russia. Andreyev was editor of the annual *St. Vladimir Calendar*, where he printed his own and many other theological and philosophical articles in defense of true Orthodoxy and documenting the origin and history of the Catacomb Church in Russia. Every year on St. Vladimir's feast day, when Russians from all over the Eastern United States would come on pilgrimage to the Memorial Church, Andreyev would give flaming addresses on true Orthodoxy, the combating of worldliness and atheism, the future resurrection of Orthodox Russia, and the principles of Orthodox monarchy (without which he found the future of Russia to be unthinkable).

I. M. ANDREYEV is not easy to classify as an Orthodox thinker. Corresponding to his four doctor's degrees, he was a qualifed physician and psychiatrist, historian of literature, philosopher and theologian. His writings reveal elements of all these intellectual strands simultaneously, and that is what gives them a rather unique quality and value.

The central thread of his Orthodox teaching is the *defense of true Orthodoxy*. On the most obvious ("jurisdictional") level, this meant a defense of the True-Orthodox (Catacomb) Church of Russia to which he had belonged and for which he became one of the chief apologists in the free world. Among the Russian "jurisdictions" of the Diaspora, he found only the Russian Church Outside of Russia to have the spirit of the Catacomb Church inside Russia, the others being modernizing separatists from it, spiritually akin to the Moscow

Patriarchate which at various times they have recognized to have "spiritual" authority over them. His defense of the Catacomb Church was always on a very high level, always on theological and spiritual grounds, and even in the height of polemical arguments, and after his own bitter experience in the Soviet Union, he never went to unnecessary extremes in his condemnation of the betrayal of Orthodoxy by the Moscow Patriarchate. Even in his celebrated and provocative article, "Does the Moscow Patriarchate Have Grace?" *(Orthodox Russia*, 1948, nos. 17, 18, 19), after enumerating the reasons why one might *doubt* that the Mysteries of the Moscow Patriarchate are grace-filled he carefully steps back from any incautious statement with the very wise observation that "the falling away of a Church from God and the conversion of it into a 'synagogue of satan' is a *process*. But the Soviet church has entered on the path which will lead it to this 'synagogue' — of this there can be no doubt." Without presuming to make any judgment himself on this question, he leaves it to the decision of a future Council of the whole Russian Orhodox Church. This whole article in general is quite profound philosophically and theologically, setting forth the same idea as the "catacomb documents" of 1971: that the Soviet authority is not a true authority requiring obedience, according to St. Paul (Rom. 13:1), but an illegitimate anti-Christian authority. With great insight he speaks of the "mystical power" of Communism, which he sees as a *new* phenomenon in human history, a direct preparation for the reign of Antichrist. In other articles he subjects Communism itself to a relentless scientific and philosophical criticism, showing that while it was powerless to prove the truth of atheism and materialism, it *did* prove (with its endless murders, tortures, crimes, and destruction) the existence of objective evil and its founder, the devil. (See "On the Character of Scientific-Atheistic Propaganda in Soviet Russia," *Orthodox Way*, 1956; "Christianity and Bolshevism," *St. Vladimir Calendar*, 1955.) His outlines of *the History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to the Present Day* (Jordanville, 1952) is virtually the only book of its kind that examines the "jurisdictional" history of 20th-century Russian Orthodoxy from the point of view of faithfulness to Christ and church tradition. For Andreyev, the concept of *true Orthodoxy* is entirely permeated with the experience of the *new catacombs* of our century: everything he wrote has a feeling of urgency, seriousness, and deep commitment that is often not understandable to those who have not lived under conditions of persecution, betrayal, and secret (often literally underground) church meetings. His teaching constitutes a *catacomb theology and philosophy* for Orthodox Christians today, remote from the idle academic exercises of most "Orthodox theologians" in the 20th century.

All of Andreyev's writings reflect his philosophical background, but he made perhaps the best use of his philosophical mind in his articles on the uses and limitations of science. Trained scientists themselves are seldom able to look sufficiently far outside their specialty in order to place science in a broader and deeper philosophical context; and those who attempt to evaluate science from the viewpoint of theology or academic philosophy are often too general and imprecise in their conclusions. Andreyev, however, being both a trained scientist and a philosopher — as well as a theologian — was in a uniquely advantageous position to view all three fields of knowledge in proper perspective. His article, "Christian Truth and Scientific Knowledge" *(Orthodox Way,* 1961) brilliantly defines the spheres and methods of these two kinds of knowledge and points out how there can be no conflict whatever between *true* science and *true* Christianity. "Only with a superficial knowledge do there arise *false* contradictions between faith and knowledge, beween religion and science. With a deeper knowledge these false contradictions disappear without a trace . . . A broad, deep scientific and philosophical education not only does not hinder faith in God, but makes it easier, because the whole arsenal of the authentic attainments of scientific-philosophical thought is a natural apologetic material for religious faith. Moreover, honest knowledge often has a methodical opportunity of uncovering corruptions of faith and exposing superstitions, whether religious or scientific-philosophical" (p. 72).

In Andreyev's own case, his scientific and philosophical knowledge was especially valuable in defending Orthodox Christianity against its contemporary attackers. In his textbook, *Orthodox Christian Apologetics* (the only one of his books to be translated into English, Jordanville, 1957), he attempts to give "a basis for an organically-whole Orthodox conception of the world" (p. 5). In this book he makes full use of scientific facts but does not overestimate their value, realizing that "in the utilization of scientific facts it is necessary to be extremely cautious not to become overly absorbed in strictly scientific proof as do Roman Catholics, remembering that all sciences give only a temporary hypothetical knowledge, while the object of Apologetics is the eternal and unchangeable truth" (p. 7). He also resists the temptation of overemphasizing criticism of anti-Christian views, "to which inexperienced Christian apologists are exposed," seeing that Apologetics "should not squander its efforts in trivial criticism of private, narrow-minded fallacies," but should emphasize "the radiantly-bright image of Christian truth," presented in the most understandable way, which "convinces one much better than the most exact logical proofs" (p. 6). Faithful to these principles, the book is calm and moderate in tone, broad in scope (making maximum use of non-Orthodox sources when they are relevant), and quite definite in its conclusions, even in spheres which some Orthodox apologists, less scientifically equipped, would prefer to leave indefinite or hazy. Thus, for example, he does not avoid the question of "evolution" where it touches on the origin of man, and he comes to conclusions, on the basis of scientific and patristic evidence, rather different from his youthful faith in Bergson's evolutionism: "the animal ancestors of mankind exist only in the invention of the Darwinists; they exist nowhere in nature and never existed . . . To deny the fact that man has existed only about 8000 years is hardly possible" (pp. 66-7). His criticism of scientific "uniformitarianism," and his ideas on the "evolution of the laws of nature" give food for a more thorough patristic investigation of some of the important questions raised by the theory of evolution.

Interestingly, *Orthodox Christian Apologetics* has penetrated the Iron Curtain and was used extensively by the Moscow priest Fr. Dimitry Dudko in his talks to his flock in 1974 (published in English as *Our Hope,* Crestwood, N.Y., 1977) — thus proving its apologetic value in present-day Soviet Russia. In Fr. Dimitry's urgent moral tone, in his emphasis on the importance of suffering, and in his ability to come quickly to the point of an intellectual question, he is akin to Andreyev; but he lacks the preciseness in church questions which Andreyev acquired by his catacomb experience. Despite the fact that Fr. Dimitry quotes more extensively from Andreyev (pp. 68-72, 95-99) than from any other single source in his book, and that he gives his name and the title and date of publication of *Orthodox Christian Apologetics* — still the translator (who gives information in footnotes on virtually all other writers mentioned) gives no word of information as to who "I. M. Andreyev" might be. A sad but symptomatic commentary on our times: that one of the profoundest Russian minds of the century is a name "unknown" to scholarship — precisely because he rejected the wisdom of this world and chose the path of "conservative," genuine Orthodoxy.

I.M. ANDREYEV

Of Andreyev's theological writings one may cite especially his *Orthodox Christian Moral Theology* (Jordanville, 1966), where he sets forth the general principles of Christian conduct according to patristic teaching, with strict adherence to the Orthodox *hierarchy of values*, according to which moral conduct is entirely dependent on religious principles and can never be divorced from them to form an "autonomous morality." He also devoted several articles to the Most Holy Mother of God, contrasting the Orthodox veneration of Her to Protestant and Roman Catholic ideas, and describing his beloved "Blue Feast" — the Annunciation.

Perhaps the most penetrating of Andreyev's writings are those devoted to Russian literature. His *Outlines of the History of Russian Literature in the 19th Century* (Jordanville, 1968) is a collection of essays which are virtually unique in literary criticism. They are written with a theological dimension and depth, a philosophical wholeness of world-view, and a psychological insight that are to be found together in no other thinker. His essay on V. Soloviev in this collection is a masterpiece which sensitively analyzes this religious philosopher's "spiritual experiences" and shows them, on the basis of Orthodox patristic writings, to be classic examples of *prelest*, spiritual deception. Without losing sympathy for Soloviev (especially in his last years, when he came closer to Orthodoxy), Andreyev uses this article to set clearly against each other the "renovated" Christianity of Soloviev and his followers and the "conservative" Orthodoxy of the Holy Fathers. The "renovationists" attacked the Russian Church especially of the last two centuries as being in a state of "paralysis" (or, in the words of more recent renovationists, "Western captivity"), blind to the multitude of holy ascetics and confessors which that Church has produced precisely in these centuries. "We need no 'renaissances' of Christianity, no 'new religious self-consciousness,' for Orthodox Christianity has never died and can never die, and there is no 'new' religious consciousness that leads to salvation!" (p. 279).

The essay on Dostoyevsky in the same book is a remarkable example of a deeply *Christian* literary criticism. With deep psychological insight, he seeks the reality of Dostoyevsky's growth in Christianity, judging his mature Christian message in the light of the Orthodox hierarchy of values, without overlooking the flaws that were also present. Especially striking in this essay is Andreyev's answer to Ivan Karamazov's humanitarian concern over the sufferings of children; he cites the Orthodox Lives of Saints which describe the heavenly crowns attained by children for their innocent sufferings.

Other of Andreyev's writings (for example, "On the Orthodox Christian Moral Upbringing of Pre-school Children", *Orthodox Way*, 1959; on St. John of Kronstadt, *Orthodox Way*, 1958; on the principles of Orthodox monarchy, *Orthodox Way*, 1951; on the Imperial Martyrs and the need for the Russian people to repent for their regicide and apostasy, *(St. Vladimir Calendar*, 1972) reveal him to have been a thoroughgoing convert to true "conservative" Orthodoxy, without those many "qualifications" by which numerous converts, both new and old, have shown their failure to understand the *wholeness of the Orthodox world-view.*

In all his writings, as in his life, Andreyev was a man of great *heart.* He suffered terribly from the low level of church and moral awareness in our times, both in the Soviet Union and in the free world. It is very likely that his creative years would have been even more fruitful than they were if he had not been weighed down by the feeling that *few seem to care deeply* for God, for Orthodoxy, for their fellow man. One article especially (printed as an appendix to his *Moral Theology*) reveals his *deep Christian concern,* something which truly seems now to be vanishing from the face of the earth.

This article, entitled simply "Weep!" and dedicated to the memory of Dostoyevsky (who more than any other figure in Russian literature described human suffering and its meaning), tells simply of one of the cold and "senseless" crimes of a large American city. A 29-year-old mother in New York City, in a fit of rage, beat to death her two-month-old son, leaving him unimaginably deformed; and she expressed no regret over her crime. Andreyev describes the wounds suffered by the small body with sickening clinical detail — and then stops, knowing that many readers will protest against such "unnecessary" details. "People have become deaf to sufferings. They either do not hear or do not wish to hear about what is done, not in a nightmare, but in reality." He calls to the Orthodox conscience of his readers. "All for one and one for all are guilty: this is the essence of the social ethic of Christianity . . . We are all guilty, for we are sinful; we do evil, contribute our evil to the universal 'storehouse of evil.' And this evil accumulates into an immense universal energy of evil and seeks for its incarnation the vessels of bodies without grace, and when it finds them it becomes incarnate in them and they perform great evil deeds . . . Let each one think of himself . . . What were you doing on that evening when this unbelievable but authentic evil deed was performed? Perhaps it was your sin, your immoral deed, your malice, which turned out to be the last little drop which caused the vessel of evil to overflow. This is the way we must reflect, if we are Christians . . .

"Weep, brothers and sisters! Do not be ashamed of these tears! . . . Weep! And let these tears be the fount in which the Lord will baptise the child-martyr, who was probably unbaptized, being chrismated — in place of oil — with his innocent child's blood. Weep! Let your tears also be a fount of a different energy, an energy of good that fights against the energy of evil, which by its power will save at least one child from innocent tortures and at least one criminal mother from an unforgiveable sin. Let these tears also awaken many of the indifferent . . . Do not be ashamed to weep with tears of grief, compassion, and *repentance*."

These words are Andreyev's testament to us, the fervent cry of his soul. A man of rare erudition and sensitivity, he poured all of his talents into serving God with the whole of his burning heart and soul. For him true Orthodoxy was not a catchword, and not simply a means for preserving himself from the apostasy of a corrupt world. He deeply realized that *whoever would preserve his soul shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his soul for My sake shall find it* (Matt. 16:25); therefore, deeply rooted in true Orthodoxy, he spent his life in *losing his soul*, sacrificing himself for the sake of others, out of love for Christ.

True Christianity has become so weak today that all of this may seem strange to many who regard themselves as perfectly Orthodox. Few understood Andreyev in his own lifetime; he was too deep, too burning for them. In a way, he was a sign of the future resurrection of Holy Russia, for which he fervently hoped. Having experienced deeply and fully the attraction of the best of modern wisdom, he ended — not merely by renouncing it — but by *surpassing* it through making his own the higher wisdom of the Holy Fathers. His "convert" experience is invaluable to us and gives us a key to understanding the heart of true Orthodoxy, the Catacomb Church, in Russia today.

In the latter part of his life Andreyev himself suffered a cruel blow from the coldness of the modern world: he was attacked and beaten by hoodlums in a New York City elevator. He never fully recovered from this, and in his last years his intellectual creativity was gone. For the last months of his life he was mostly unconscious. But even thus, in a way, his prayer to God at the Diveyevo "canal" was answered: "O Lord, *take away* from me all earthly prosperity . . ." Deprived of his greatest earthly gift, his brilliant intellect, he lived on the spiritual capital which he had acquired up to then. In his address on "The Psychology and Psychopathology of Old Age" *(St. Vladimir Calendar,* 1970), originally delivered before the Pirogov Society, Andreyev emphasizes that "a great consolation in all sorrows of life in mature years, and especially in old age, is *the religious feeling that has been preserved.* This consolation can give a quiet, calm old age and help one to calmly accept death as a sleep in the hope that eternal life exists in another better world."

As God is faithful to those who truly serve Him, we cannot but believe that He answered, in thse last years, the second half of Andreyev's petition at Diveyevo as well: "Do not deprive me of the joy of communion with Thee, grant me to preserve to death the remembrance of this present blessed moment of the sensing of Thy Holy Spirit."

The *true* experience of the Holy Spirit, faithfulness to *true* Orthodoxy with one's whole heart and soul: this is the message of I. M. Andreyev to those who have not become too cold in heart to hear it.

I

The Catacomb Church

by

I.M. Andreyev

For the True Orthodox Church there was left
no alternative but to go into the catacombs....
The true Russian Orthodox Church went into the
catacombs, where it remains to the present
day as an invisible city of Kitezh, preserving itself
as the unspotted Bride of Christ.
I.M. Andreyev

1

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

In recent years a marvellous witness has come out of the enslaved Soviet Union: a long series of protests from Orthodox laymen — and a few of the clergy — against the continued persecution of the Christian faithful by the Soviet Government and by its 'State Church,' the Moscow Patriarchate.

But how can this be? — a 'Church' that persecutes its own faithful? The layman Boris Talantov, now in prison in the USSR for 'anti-Governmental activity,' has carefully analyzed this question and found its solution to lie in 'Sergianism,' i.e., the attitude of those who accept the principle of the 'Declaration' made by Metropolitan Sergius in 1927 that the Soviet Union's "joys and successes are our joys and successes, and its misfortunes are our misfortunes," which in effect made the Moscow Patriarchate the obedient tool of Communist purposes, which function it has continued to serve down to the present day. Boris Talantov in a recent article has stated that "the roots of the serious ecclesiastical crisis which has now been revealed were planted precisely by Patriarch Sergius.... Objectively, this address (the Declaration of 1927) and the ensuing activity of Metr. Sergius was a betrayal of the Church." Further, according to Talantov, most of the churches that remained open after the persecution of the '30's no longer recognized Metropolitan Sergius as their head.*

It is these clergy and laymen who do not recognize the official 'Moscow Patriarchate' who comprise the underground or 'Catacomb Church' in the USSR. It is today an 'illegal' Church in the USSR and for obvious reasons very little can be said about its present extent, organization, etc. But there are

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* John B. Dunlop, *The Recent Activities of the Moscow Patriarchate*, St. Nectarios Educational Series, no. 46, 1970, pp. 109, 113-4.

nonetheless at least three sources of reliable information about it: (1) the letters and petitions of bishops and delegations of clergy and laymen who protested the Declaration in 1927 and broke off communion with the official Soviet Church — these hierarchs and faithful were apparently in the majority, and the Soviet Church attained its present ascendancy and 'canonicity' in the USSR through the Government's arrest and murder of the leading anti-Sergianists; (2) statements in the recent Soviet press concerning the arrest and imprisonment of members of underground churches and monasteries belonging to the 'True Orthodox Church' of 'Tikhonites' who refuse to recognize the Moscow Patriarchate; the Communist Government considers this Church of such importance that it published a general account and historical summary of it in the 'Atheist Dictionary,' printed in Moscow in 1964 for the guidance of anti- religious activists; (3) the statements of those who have been members of the Catacomb Church in the USSR and have then come to the West. The united testimony of these sources leads one to the conclusion that the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union is a submerged iceberg, a reality of which only a small portion is visible on the surface. Only when Russia, in God's time, will be freed of the tyranny of Communism and its obedient 'Patriarchate' will the secret life of Russian Orthodoxy be made fully known.

The Catacomb Church

THE REALITY OF LIFE in the Soviet Union is a frightful nightmare that can be neitner understood nor believed by those who have not experienced it. And the most frightful thing is not the material deprivations, arrests, and banishments, but rather the fact that there a conscious, systematic, and diabolically ingenious battle is being waged for the possession of the human soul, against God. This is the chief aim, and everything else is subordinated to it.

Qualitatively the forerunners of Antichrist have already made his kingdom a reality there. The actual Antichrist will devise nothing *new*: it will only remain for him to disseminate the methods of the Soviet NKVD (Secret Police) to the other five-sixths of the earth's surface. The only bright, joyful, and encouraging phenomenon there is the existence of the Catacomb Church, the Church of the wilderness. It permits us to evaluate optimistically the battle of the Russian soul with atheism: there, the infallible Church has been preserved, against which, as Christ has promised us, the gates of hell shall not prevail.

I cannot name many names and events. For understandable reasons I cannot describe much in detail. I can only say very briefly or hint. But I also cannot be silent altogether; I do not have the right and I do not wish to, since by my silence I would betray the Truth and the memory of the priest-martyrs whom I have seen, with whom I have spoken, and with whom I shared five frightful years of imprisonment in the concentration camp at Solovki.

Patriarch Tikhon wisely conducted the ship of the Church on the sea of life, which had become agitated by the Revolution. His situation was extraordinarily difficult, not only because he was constantly threatened by physical danger, not even because for all seven years of his patriarchate he passed every day through moral tortures, but chiefly because there has never been such a situation in the Church's history. He had to lay out a completely new road across unknown country. This is why his errors are so understandable and so forgiveable. And his merit is all the greater in that he foresaw and laid the foundation of the Catacomb Church: while alive he blessed the physician-psychiatrist, Professor Zhizhilenko, to found the Catacomb Church. Later Professor Zhizhilenko, working under the Soviets as a physician, received a secret tonsure and was a bishop of the Catacomb Church, being subsequently arrested, imprisoned, and, in 1930, shot.

After the death of the Patriarch, his successors one after the other were banished. And then Metropolitan Sergius, becoming head of the Church, published the Declaration known to everyone, which acknowledged the joys and sorrows of the Soviets as his own and declared all martyrs political criminals.

All Orthodox Russia was shaken, and delegations with protests extended to Metr. Sergius from all corners of the land.

As a member of such a delegation from the Petrograd Diocese I too came to Moscow. In the Metropolitan's reception room forty people were waiting, and everyone of whom I asked his reason for coming replied that he had come as a delegate to see the Metropolitan. Russia had not accepted this Declaration!

The Metropolitan received us out of order. Finding out the reason why we had come, he reaffirmed everything written in the Declaration, and in answer to our convictions called us 'counter-revolutionaries' and 'schismatics.' Not taking his blessing, we left without obtaining anything.

Soon the churches that did not accept the Declaration began to be closed. In Petrograd only one remained, but everyone who entered it was registered and later arrested. This was the time when the atheist Soviet power demanded of believers that they go to churches of the official Church.

I, too, was arrested and banished for five years. At Solovki I encountered many hierarchs of the true Church. And there we already had our Catacomb church.

In the concentration camps the persecution against faith was completely open: priests were shorn and shaved, forbidden to wear cassocks and crosses. For making the sign of the cross a new term of imprisonment was given. Of course there was no question of any open services. The relics of saints were exhibited for mockery in an anti-religious museum with blasphemous inscriptions — even the saints suffered with us! The monks of Solovki who remained there as specialist-laborers were forbidden to have any contact with the prisoners under penalty of death. It was especially difficult before great feasts: it was impossible to gather even in twos, no one was allowed anywhere without special passes, night rounds were made more frequent, sentries were doubled. In order to pray one had to be ready at any minute for a martyr's death. And we were ready for it, always carrying with us, like the first Christians, a Particle of the Holy Gifts. I brought such a Particle abroad and gave it to Metropolitan Anastassy.

And not only were we ready to die, but many did die, confident that somewhere there, outside the reach of the Soviet authorities, where there is freedom — there the Truth was shining in all its purity. There people were living by it and submitting to it. There people did not bow down to Antichrist. And what terror overwhelmed me when, fairly recently, I managed to come abroad and found out that some people here 'spiritually' recognize the Soviet Church. *Spiritually!* Many of us there fell, 'for fear of the Jews,' or giving in to the temptation of outward cooperation with the authorities. I knew priests of the official Church who, at home, tore their hair out, who smashed their heads making prostrations, begging forgiveness for their apostasy, calling themselves Cain — but nonetheless they did not have the strength to decide upon martyrdom. But even they *spiritually* did not recognize the Red Church. But these others abroad — it is precisely *spiritually* that they submit to it. What good fortune that our priest-martyrs, in dying, did not find out about this betrayal!*

When I returned from banishment (to Leningrad) I found the Catacomb Church. I personally know about 200 places where services were conducted. Twelve travelling priests and two bishops served them. These places were quite diverse: from peasant huts right to Soviet institutions, to which one was admitted only by pass. But at that time the Catacomb Church did not have any general interconnecting organization.

Having gotten abroad, I naturally began to seek out people who had belonged to the Catacomb Church. Most of the refugees knew nothing about it. But almost every year I have encountered at least one representative of it, even priests, and I have had written contact with a bishop.

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* The Soviets, in connection with the recent triumph of their Sergianist Church in gaining recognition from the American Metropolia, have tried to deprive the faithful even of this consolation. Two young hierarchs of the Metropolia, Bps Vladimir of Tokyo and Theodosius of Sitka, have visited the "Mother Church" in the USSR, the latter -- as the Metropolia press reports -- being followed everywhere by great crowds of people, as if to tell the faithful: abandon hope in any free Russian Church abroad -- its hierarchs are with your oppressors!

According to my information the Catacomb Church now has not only become stronger, but has also obtained some kind of organizational forms. According to one bishop, although there are comparatively few active members of the Catacomb Church, the vast majority of the people sympathize with and help them. Without this sympathy in Soviet conditions the Catacomb Church could not exist at all.

Abroad I have been struck by the circumstance that most of the clergy of the Catacomb Church who have come here continue to remain in secret, not entering even the true — Synodal — Church. This greatly disturbed me: was I then mistaken in entering the Russian Church Outside of Russia? And if not, then why do they remain in secret? And then, recently, I received an answer to my perplexity: A bishop of the Catacomb Church, unknown to me, who is living abroad, sent me through a third person a letter. He speaks first in principle about my articles, which he has read in *Orthodox Russia*, and in general about the correctness of my position. Then he gives an answer, as it were, to my doubts. He says that the clergy of the Catacomb Church often do not enter the Russian Church Outside of Russia — which has not erred in its relationship to atheistic Communism — because the hattle is still raging, and who can say whether it will not be necessary for them to apply their experience here, in the West. The forerunners of Antichrist have already appeared and no one knows when the time will come when every believer, without entering the house, will have to flee into the mountains, i.e., go into the Catacombs. And he is right: are there not those who wish to annihilate the Russian Church Outside of Russia? Concerning this, those who have gone away from her have already spoken the first word. And if this were to happen — we pray that the Lord will not allow this! — where would we then find refuge, where would we find the infallible Church? Already almost all the Local Orthodox Churches have either bowed down to the forerunners of Antichrist or give a 'brotherly embrace' to his loyal servants!

Today there is not and there cannot be any separation between ecclesiastical affairs and politics. Politics pretends to universality, i.e., it wishes to take into its hands the resolution of questions concerning spiritual life also. This means that political actions cannot be indifferent for the Church as well. Furthermore, when Antichrist shall have power on the earth, he will naturally be a political figure. This means that the Church also will have to oppose his political persecution. And so as, even now, to weaken this opposition, his forerunners, taking advantage of the idea that the Church should be above politics, conceal their warfare against God under a political cloak: the martyrs are 'political criminals.' To be sure, the Church should not intrigue, but as soon as politics touches on questions of spiritual life, the Church cannot close her eyes to this.

This is why the question of the battle against Communism is a question of the spirit, and not of politics. This is why the question of our jurisdictional divisions is not a question of 'quarrels of bishops over portfolios.' No, it is a question of cooperation (or tacit agreement) with the forerunners of Antichrist, or else uncompromising battle against them. This alone separates us from those who have broken away from the Truth; but it does not separate us from the Russian people, for there the soul, even if it is invisible, even if it has retreated within itself, is still alive, is not *spiritually* enslaved; it is drawn to the light of Truth. And a testimony of this is the existence, in the frightful conditions of the Soviet Union, where there are many Judases out of fear and others out of conscience, of a Catacomb Church that has ***not* fallen.**

2

Bishop Maxim of Serpukhov

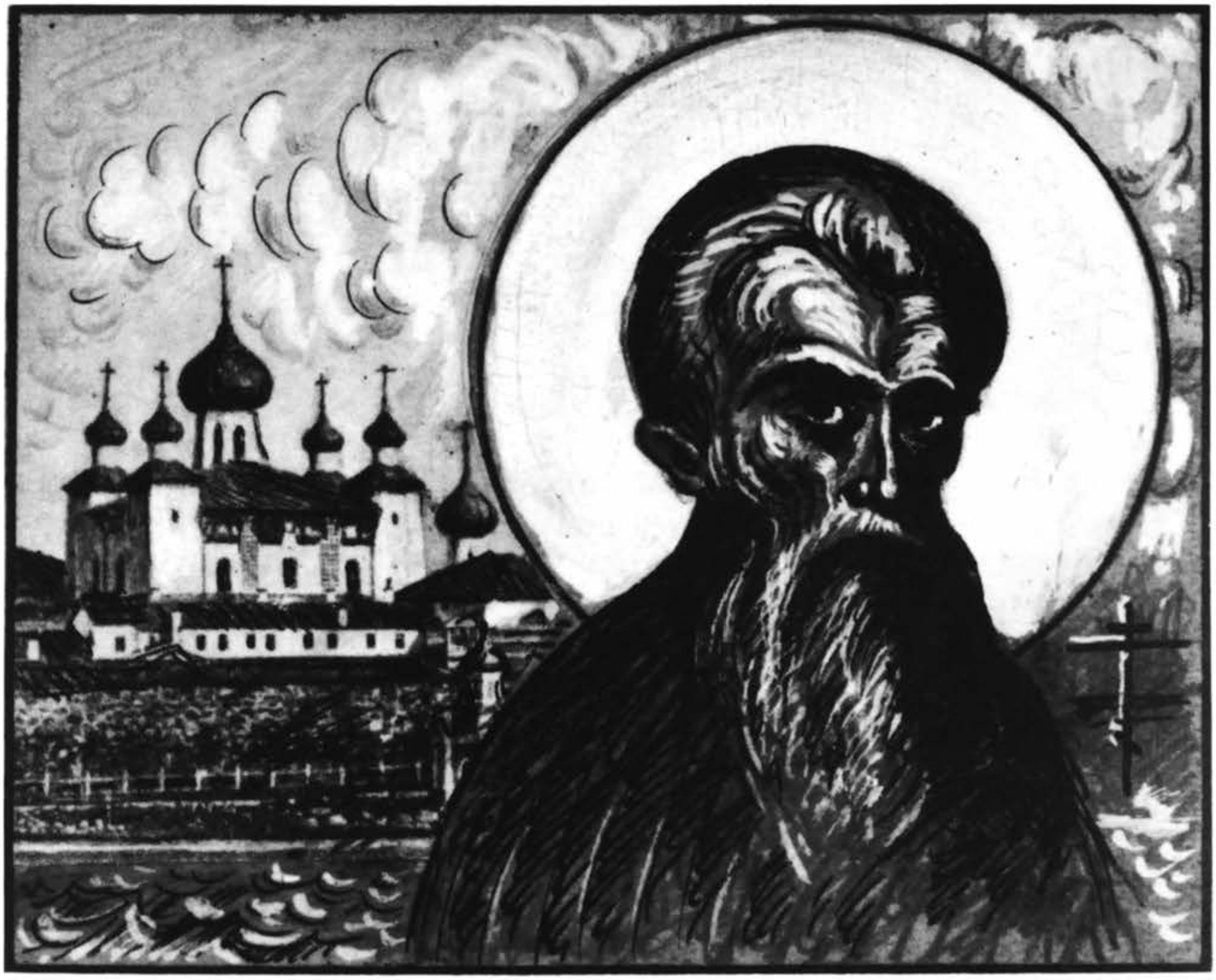
FIRST BISHOP OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH

Commemorated July 6 *(†1930)*

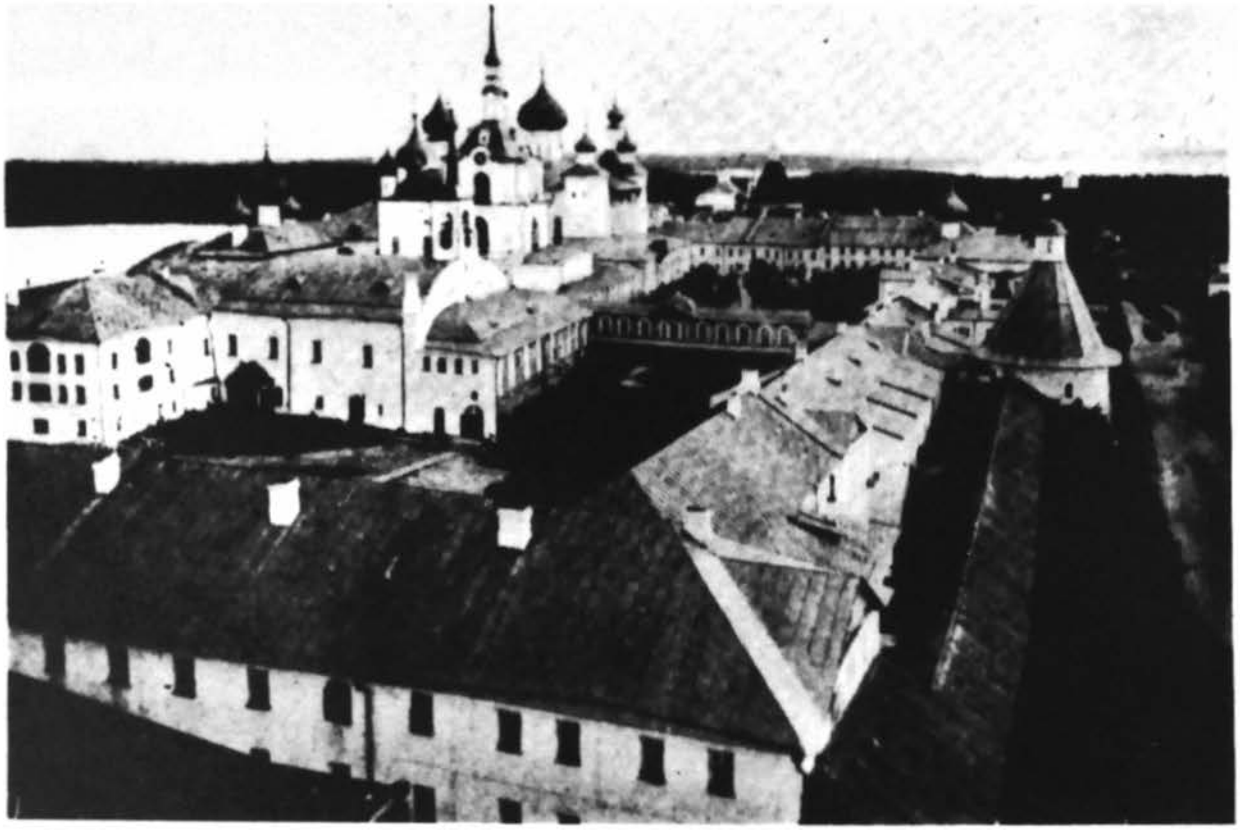
> *"Even if all the world shall enter into communion with the (heretical) Patriarch, I will not."*
> ST. MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR

BISHOP MAXIM OF SERPUKHOV, Diocese of Moscow, was in the world Michael Alexandrovich Zhizhilenko and was born on March 2, 1885. His parents lived at that time in Kalisha (in Poland), where his father was procurator of the Circuit Court of Kalisha for 25 years and enjoyed a great respect among the people. The family was large, patriarchal, harmonious; all nine children grew up and studied in the city of Kalisha. The mother brought up all in a religious spirit, inspiring in the children love for God, Church, and fellow man.

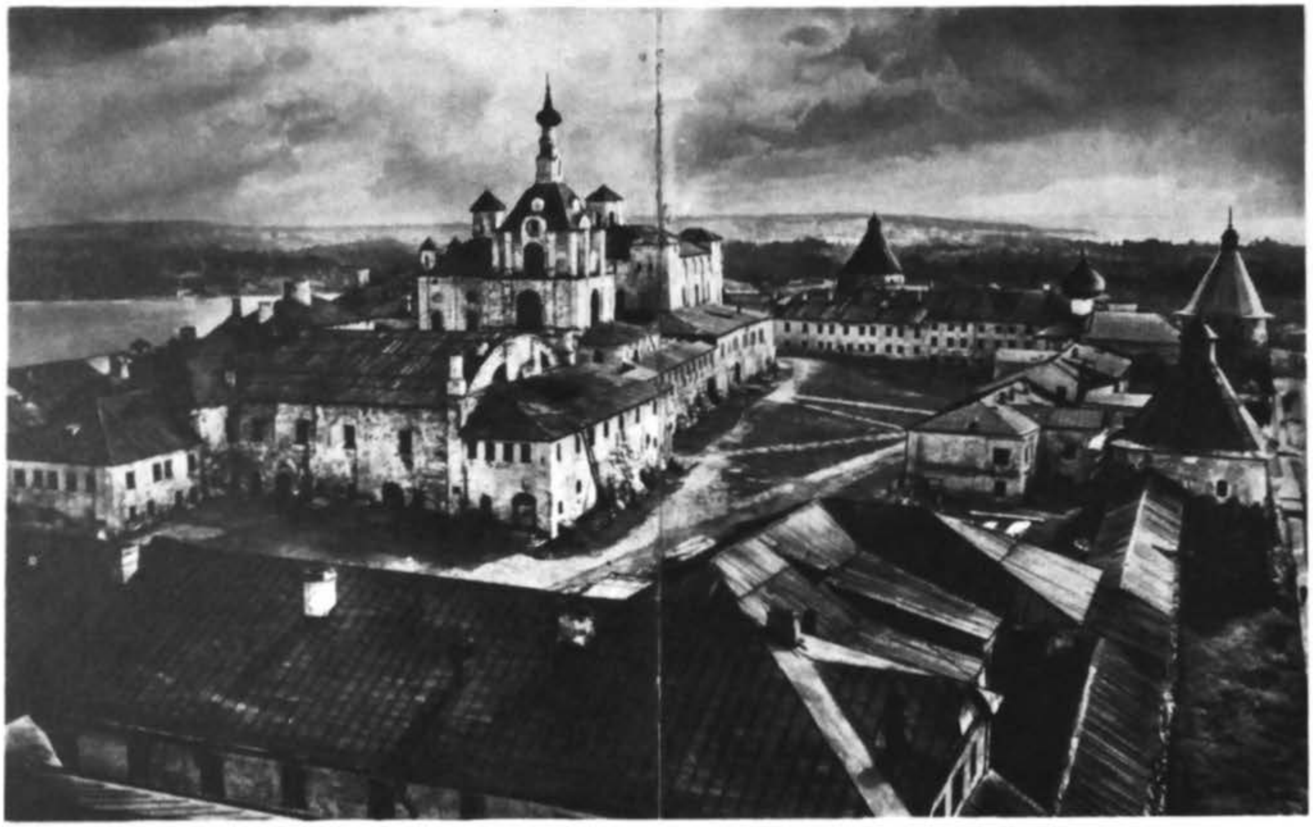
He was the younger brother of the well-known Professor of Criminal Law at the Petersburg University, Alexander Alexandrovich Zhizhilenko, who in 1922 appeared for the defense in the famous trial of Metropolitan Veniamin. In the words of Vladika Maxim, his brother was not a religious man, and at his appearance at the trial of 'church figures' he declared at the beginning of his testimony that he was appearing, being an atheist, solely as a representative of the law and a defender of justice. However, when he found out about the secret tonsure of his younger brother, Alexander Alexandrovich came to his quarters and received his blessing. In the words of the widow of A. A. Zhizhilenko (who died soon after his brother's tonsure) this event (secret monasticism and episcopacy) produced a tremendous impression on him and, while dying, he said in delirium: "They say that there is no God, but He *does* exist after all."



Bishop Maxim, New Martyr of Solovki
(a contemporary iconographic sketch)



Courtyard of Solovki Monastery before the Revolution



Courtyard of Solovki — a Communist prison

BISHOP MAXIM

After finishing preparatory school, Michael Alexandrovich entered Moscow University in the Department of Medicine. This surprised his relatives, because his father and three brothers were lawyers. This was approximately in 1908. About 1911, being a student, he married a fellow student, but he lived with her only half a year. Having gone to her parents in the city of Eysk, she died there, being unable to bear her first pregnancy. The couple desired in no way to terminate this pregnancy artificially, even though both knew that the girl was in danger of death. Vladika called his deceased wife a 'righteous one.' At that same time he too was very ill and underwent an operation for appendicitus and was so bad that people were afraid to tell him of the death of his wife. When he began to recover, great was his grief and despair over this loss.

As his sister related, it was just at this time that her brother had a dream that very much affected his later life. He saw his deceased mother, who told him to pray to Saint Panteleimon the Healer, whom she had greatly venerated while alive. On the very next day Michael went to the chapel of Saint Panteleimon in Moscow, bought there a small icon of the Saint and never parted with it, and prayers to Saint Panteleimon the Healer helped him in his later life. He became religious, extraordinarily kind, responsive to the grief of others, and helped the poor.

It should also be noted that the Lord gave him great musical talents. He played the piano superbly, himself composed music, and, as a psychiatrist, used music in the treatment of his patients.

After completing the university, Michael was a psychiatrist in the Sokolniki district of Moscow. When war broke out in 1914 he became a physician in the Kuban Plastan Batallion and was on the Austrian front. Here he almost died of typhus, having become infected by sick Austrian prisoners.

For a short time he was a professor of psychiatry in a provincial university, and then became a practicing physician-therapist. For the next several years he was chief physician of the 'Taganka' prison in Moscow.

In 1921 his sister in Belgrade received the only and last letter from her brother. In this letter, which began with the sign of the cross, he wrote that we are all sinful in the misfortunes that have come upon us, that we must pray to the Lord and beg His forgiveness and help. Only a year or two later did another letter come from friends, in which in a disguised manner it was said that Michael had received the priesthood without leaving his first position, i.e., of prison doctor. Thus he became both a spiritual and bodily physician; for the time being the enemies had not found this out. Later she was likewise informed that he had been sent for three years "to one of the Northern resorts" (i.e., prison camps).

The physician of the prison hospital was known by all those confined in this fearsome prison, which was overfilled beyond all measure primarily with criminals, but to a significant degree also with political prisoners; they well knew and remembered him who had long been known as the guardian angel of this prison.

In his difficult post he was not only a physician, but also a great master of the heart, a comforter and father. Before him, a physician, not infrequently as before a priest the most inveterate and incorrigible criminals confessed, finding for themselves not only comfort, but often also a return to honest life. Many in Moscow knew that he slept on bare boards, that he ate prison food, that be unfailingly distributed all his salary to the prisoners. He acted in this way not only now, under the Bolsheviks, but earlier as well, under the Imperial government.

BEING A DEEPLY religious man, Vladika, while still a layman, made the acquaintance of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, whom he deeply revered. The Patriarch greatly loved Dr. Zhizhilenko and often made use of his advice. Their relationship in time took on the character of the most intimate friendship. In the words of Vladika Maxim, the Patriarch confided in him the most secret thoughts and feelings. Thus, for example, in one of their conversations His Holiness expressed to Vladika Maxim (then still simply a doctor) his painful doubts as to the benefit of further concessions to the Soviet power. In making these concessions, he became more and more convinced, with horror, that the boundary of the 'political' demands of the Soviet power lay beyond the bounds of faithfulness to Christ and the Church. And not long before his death the Patriarch expressed the thought that apparently the only way out for the Russian Orthodox Church to preserve her faithfulness to Christ would be, in the near future, to go into the catacombs. Therefore Patriarch Tikhon blessed Dr. Zhizhilenko to accept secret monasticism and then, in case in the near future the higher church hierarchy were to betray Christ and concede to the Soviet power the spiritual freedom of the Church, to become a secret bishop.

While telling us, physicians imprisoned at Solovki and true 'Tikhonites,' of Patriarch Tikhon's refusal once to bless one of the participants in the

White Movement, Vladika related in detail concerning the extreme caution of Patriarch Tikhon, who did not show to those around him his authentic deepest relationship to questions of politics, but who revealed this in strict confidence to his no less cautious friend, and concerning the immense joy he had in connection with the activity of Metropolitan Anthony abroad. "How they there well understand everything and do not, apparently, judge me," the Patriarch once expressed himself with tears, having in mind the activity of the so-called 'Karlovchany.'*

Vladika Maxim told us in detail of the many attempts to kill Patriarch Tikhon. Once a supposed madman threw himself with a knife upon the Patriarch as he was coming out of the altar. Unexpectedly, however, instead of Patriarch Tikhon someone else came out, and the 'madman,' being 'sanely surprised,' delivered no wound to the one who came out. Another time, when the cell-attendant of the Patriarch was killed, the murderer ran about the Patriarch's apartments without noticing Patriarch Tikhon sitting in an armchair. Several attempts to poison His Holiness were made with the aid of medicines sent to him.

Vladika Maxim also told us of some disagreements with Patriarch Tikhon. The chief of these lay in the fact that His Holiness was optimistically inclined, believing that all the terrors of Soviet life could yet pass, and that Russia could still be reborn through repentance. Vladika Maxim, however, was inclined to a pessimistic view of the events that were occurring and believed that we had already entered into the final days of the apocalyptic period. "Apparently," Vladika Maxim concluded, smiling (which happened rarely), "we infected each other a little with our attitudes: I infected him with pessimism, and he me with optimism."

His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon died on March 25, 1925, being, in the words of Vladika Maxim, unquestionably poisoned. The Patriarch's 'Testament,' according to Vladika Maxim's categorical assertion, was a counterfeit. At the same time he cited the authoritative opinion on this question of his brother, a professor of Criminal Law.

Michael Alexandrovich fulfilled the will of the late Patriarch Tikhon and in 1927, when Metropolitan Sergius published his well-known Declaration, he received a secret tonsure with the name Maxim, and became the first secret Catacomb bishop.

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* I.e., the Russian Church Outside of Russia, led until his death in 1936 by Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky.

When the new illegal bishop appeared secretly in Serpukhov, having been consecrated in Petrograd by the 'rebellious' and 'suspended' Bishop Dimitry (of Gdov), who then, in succession from Metropolitan Joseph, headed the whole of the opposition to Metr. Sergius, and when the faithful of Moscow recognized in the person of the new bishop the doctor of 'Taganka,' this event produced a great impression. In Serpukhov in a very short time all 18 parishes went over to the new bishop, i.e., to the opposition. In neighboring Kolomna the same thing happened. In Zvenigorod, Volokolamsk, Pereyaslav Zadessky, and other cities a significant number of the parishes followed the example of Serpukhov.

Of great interest is the following document — a declaration sent to Metr. Sergius by the clergy and laity of Serpukhov on December 30, 1927, which one must presume to have been written not without the influence, editing, or even authorship of Bishop Maxim.

"In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"Finding it no longer possible to remain on that slippery and ambiguous path on which You, by Your Declaration and decrees, have placed the entire Orthodox Church, and submitting to the voice of conscience and duty before God and the faithful, we the undersigned break off canonical and prayerful communion with You and the so-called 'Patriarchal Synod' and refuse to acknowledge You as Deputy of the *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal See, for the following reasons:

"1. Your Declaration of July 16, Your Ukase of October 20, and everything that is known of Your direction of the Church, manifestly speaks of the fact that You have placed the Church in dependence on the civil authority and have deprived her of inner freedom and independence, thereby also violating church canons and going against the decrees of the civil authority.

"2. Thus, You are nothing other than a continuation of the so-called 'Renovationist' (Living Church) movement, only in a more refined and very dangerous form, for, while declaring Your firmness of Orthodoxy and preservation of canonicity, You fog over the minds of the faithful and consciously conceal from their eyes that abyss toward which all Your decrees are irrepressibly leading the Church.

"3. The result of Your politics is before us. The faithful of the city of Serpukhov, disturbed by Your decrees, are seized by a most powerful alarm and perplexity over the destiny of the Holy Orthodox Church. We, their pastors, placed by You upon an ambiguous path, not only cannot set their hearts and minds at rest, but rather evoke on their side suspicion of betraying the work of Orthodoxy and going over to the camp of 'Renovationism.'

"All this imperatively compels us boldly to raise our voice and cease our now already criminal silence over Your mistakes and incorrect actions and, with the blessing of Dimitry, Bishop of Gdov, to disassociate ourselves from You and those who surround You. Leaving You, we do not depart from the lawful *Locum Tenens* Metropolitan Peter, and we shall give ourselves over to the judgement of a future council. May this desired council, our sole competent judge, not place to our guilt our boldness. May it judge us not as disdainers of the sacred canons of the Holy Fathers, but only as fearful to violate them."

The influence of Bishop Maxim constantly grew, and it increased especially when there was introduced into the Liturgy in Petrograd the famous "Prayer for the Holy Church," which however received among the faithful the title of "Prayer concerning the Bolsheviks." Rumor ascribed the authorship of this prayer to no one else than Bishop Maxim. His fate was sealed. The Soviet authorities knew him as a physician, as a Soviet employe. His appearance in a black ryassa at the head of a confessing Church seemed to them the highest brazenness.

In his new post Vladika did not last long. He was arrested in the middle of 1929, and therefore he spent two whole years in prison before winning his martyr's crown.

The secret bishop conducted himself so cautiously, and when arrested on the report of an informer he answered the interrogations so wisely, that the investigating authority of the Secret Police could not incriminate him in anything except for the very fact of his secret tonsure while at the same time working as Chief Physician of the Taganka prison, and they limited themselves to a punishment of "three years in the Solovki Camp" (in accordance with Art. 58, Pt. 10, i.e., for counter-revolutionary propaganda).

AT THE END of October, 1929, a new physician came to the fourth section of the Solovki Camp of Special Assignment, on the island of Solovki in the White Sea, together with one of the groups of new prisoners. The

Commandant of the Camp brought him to the 10th Company, where the workers of the Sanitarium Division were located, led him into the physicians' cell and introduced him: "Here is a new physician for you, Professor, Doctor of Medicine, Michael Alexandrovich Zhizhilenko." We, the imprisoned physicians of the Sanitarium Division of the Camp, went up to our new comrade in confinement and introduced ourselves. Our newly-arrived colleague was tall in stature, with a Herculean frame, a thick gray beard, and gray brows that hung severely over kindly blue eyes.

A week before the arrival of Dr. Zhizhilenko, we were informed by our friends in the office of the Sanitarium Division that the newly-expected physician was not an ordinary man, but was imprisoned with a special "secret" dossier and was in a special position, under special surveillance, and that he might not even be allowed to work as a physician but would be transferred to the special 14th Company, the so-called Company of "the interdicted," who are prohibited from working in their specialty and must spend the entire duration of their confinement in the so-called "general" heavy physical labor. The reason for such a "special" position was this: Dr. Zhizhilenko, while being Chief Physician of the Taganka prison in Moscow, was at the same time a secret bishop, having the monastic name of Maxim, Bishop of Serpukhov.

After an exchange of opinions on general questions, all three of us physicians told the newly-arrived one that we knew his past, the reason for his arrest and confinement in Solovki, and we went up to him for his blessing. The face of the physician-bishop became concentrated, his gray brows became yet more knit, and he slowly and solemnly blessed us. His blue eyes became yet kindlier, more gentle, and lighted up with a joyful light.

A whole week passed for all of us in oppressive waiting, until finally the position of the new physician was clarified. He was not transferred to the Company of "the interdicted." The head of the whole Sanitarium Division of the Solovki Camps, Dr. V. I. Yakhontov (a former criminal prisoner, who after the expiration of his term remained to serve as physician to the Political Police), even wished to assign Dr. Zhizhilenko, as an experienced physician, as the Chief of the Sanitarium Division of the 4th Section (i.e., for the whole island of Solovki), but this was opposed by the Chief of the Information-Interrogation Section, the most terrible Section in the camps, on which the fate and life of all prisoners entirely depended. The position of physician of the Central Infirmary was likewise forbidden Dr. Zhizhilenko. And so this experienced, mature physician was assigned to be in charge of one of the typhoid barracks and subordinated to a younger physician who had administrative authority. Soon, however, the exceptional talents and experience of Dr. Zhizhilenko as a healing physician were discovered, and they began to call him for consultations in all complicated cases. Even the great heads of the camp, important Communist-GPU agents, began to appeal to him for medical help for themselves and their families. Almost all the doctors, both young and old, began to learn from their new colleague, taking advantage of his advice and studying his method of diagnosis.

At the end of 1929 there was an outbreak on Solovki of typhoid fever which quickly assumed tremendous proportions: out of 18,000 prisoners on the island, at the end of January, 1930, there were 5000 sick. The mortality rate was extremely high, 20 to 30 per cent. And only in the section where Dr. Zhizhilenko was in charge did the mortality rate not exceed 8 to 10 per cent. The physician-bishop examined each new sick person in great detail, and the first entry in the history of his disease was always enormous. Besides the basic diagnosis of the main disease, the doctor always wrote diagnoses of all accompanying diseases and gave a detailed conclusion on the condition of every organ. His diagnoses were always precise and flawless, as was confirmed in autopsies of the dead: there was never observed the slightest discrepancy between his clinical diagnosis and the pathologico-anatomical report.

His medical prescriptions for the most part were few, but often to the basic medication would be joined some additional ones, the role of which was not always clear even to the physicians. In serious and, from the medical point of view, hopeless cases, he sometimes prescribed a very complicated treatment, which he strictly required to be undeviatingly carried out, despite the fact that various medicines had to be given every hour for days at a time. Having once carefully examined a sick man and made a medical prescription for him, on his next round Dr. Zhizhilenko, it seemed, paid little attention to him and stopped at his bed no more than a minute, feeling his pulse and looking him intensely in the eyes. Most of the sick people did not like this, and there were many complaints of the doctor's "negligence." Once Dr. Zhizhilenko was even called on this account to explain himself to the head of the Sanitarium Division. In his justification the physician-bishop indicated the statistics on the mortality rate of the section entrusted to him (extremely low compared to the other sections and all the other physicians) and the exactness of his diagnoses. While "negligently" making the rounds of the sick, he would sometimes stop before some bed and carefully, as at his first round, examine the patient anew, changing his prescription. This always meant that there had occurred a serious worsening in the patient's condition, about which the patient himself had not yet complained.

The sick died always in his arms. It seemed that the moment of death's approach was always known exactly to him. Even at night he would come suddenly into his section to a dying man some few minutes before death. He closed the eyes of every dead man, folded his arms on his chest in the form of a cross, and stood in silence, without moving, for several minutes. Apparently, he would pray. In less than a year we, all his colleagues, came to understand that he was not only a remarkable physician, but also a great man of prayer.

In personal contacts the physician-bishop, whom we all, in our doctors' cell, called "Vladika," was very reserved, rather dry, at times even severe, closed within himself, taciturn, untalkative to an extreme. Concerning himself he preferred to say nothing. The topics of his conversation always concerned either the sick or (in the circle of those persons who were very near to him spiritually) the situation of the Church.

THE ARRIVAL of Vladika Maxim at Solovki produced a great change in the attitude of the clergy who were imprisoned. At this time in the 4th Section of the Solovki camps (i.e., on the very island of Solovki), among the imprisoned bishops and priests there was observed the same schism that occurred "in freedom" after the well-known Declaration of Metr. Sergius. One part of the episcopate and the secular clergy completely broke off all communion with Metr. Sergius, remaining faithful to the unwavering position of Metropolitans Peter, Cyril, Agafangel, and Joseph, Archbishops Seraphim of Uglich and many others who witnessed their faithfulness to Christ and the Church by confession and martyrdom. Another part, however, became "Sergianists," who accepted the so-called "new church politics" of Metr. Sergius, who founded the Soviet Church and produced a neo-renovationist schism. If among the prisoners who arrived at Solovki before the publication of the Declaration of Metr. Sergius, at first the majority were "Sergianists," among the new prisoners, those who came after the Declaration, on the contrary there prevailed the so-called "Josephites," named after Metr. Joseph, around whom for the most part the unwavering and faithful children of the Church grouped themselves. With the arrival of new prisoners the number of the latter increased more and more.

BISHOP MAXIM

Just before the arrival of Vladika Maxim, on Solovki there were the following "Josephite" bishops: Bp. Victor Glazovsky (the first to come forward with an accusatory epistle against the Declaration of Metr. Sergius), Bp. Ilarion, Vicar of Smolensk, and Bp. Nektary Trezvinsky. To the "Sergianists" belonged: Archbp. Anthony of Mariupol and Bp. Ioasaph (Prince Zhevakov). Less violent, but nonetheless a "Sergianist," was Archbp. Ilarion Troitsky, who had condemned the Declaration of Metr. Sergius but had not broken off communion with him, as the "canonically correct" first hierarch of the Russian Church.

The arrival of Vladika Maxim tremendously increased the influence (which already prevailed before that) of the "Josephites."

When, after the harshest interdictions imposed by Metr. Sergius upon the "disobedient," these latter began to be arrested and shot, then the true Orthodox Russian Church began to go into the catacombs. Metr. Sergius and all the "Sergianists" categorically denied the existence of a Catacomb Church. The "Sergianists" at Solovki, of course, likewise did not believe in its existence. And suddenly — a living witness: the first catacomb bishop, Maxim of Serpukhov, arrived in Solovki.

Archbp. Ilarion Troitsky was soon taken away somewhere from Solovki, and together with him the "Sergianist" attitude also vanished in many. Only Archbp. Anthony and, especially, Bp. Ioasaph (Zhevakov) remained persistent "Sergianists." They did not wish even to meet and converse with Bp. Maxim. On the other hand Bps. Victor, Ilarion (of Smolensk) and Nektary rather quickly found the possibility not only to meet, but also to concelebrate with Vladika Maxim in secret catacomb services in the depths of the forests of Solovki. As for the "Sergianists," they conducted themselves with extreme caution and never organized any kind of secret services. In return the camp authority likewise treated them more condescendingly than the bishops, priests, and laity of whom it was known that they "did not recognize" either Metr. Sergius or the "Soviet Church."

All those arrested for ecclesiastical matters (and such, according to official secret statistics, in 1928-29 on Solovki were as many as 20 per cent) at interrogations were invariably asked what their attitude was to "our" Metr. Sergius, who headed the "Soviet Church." At the same time the exultant GPU-interrogators with malignant joy and sarcasm would demonstrate the "strict canonicity" of Metr. Sergius and his Declaration, which "violated neither canons nor dogmas."

In denying the Catacomb Church, the "Sergianists" of Solovki denied also the "rumors" that accusatory epistles had been written and protesting delegations from the dioceses had gone to Metr. Sergius. Discovering that I, a layman, had personally participated in one such delegation, Archbp. Anthony of Mariupol once, being sick in the infirmary, expressed the desire to hear my account of my trip to Metr. Sergius together with representatives of the episcopate and the secular clergy. Vladikas Victor and Maxim blessed me to go to the infirmary where Archbp. Anthony was, and tell him about this trip. In case he, after my account, should display solidarity with those who protested against the "new church politics," I was permitted to receive his blessing. But if he persisted in "Sergianism," I should not receive his blessing.

My conversation with Archbp. Anthony lasted more than two hours. I related to him in detail of the historic Delegation of the Petrograd diocese in 1927, after which the church schism occurred. At the end of my account Archbp. Anthony asked me to tell him of the person and activity of Vladika Maxim. I replied very reservedly and briefly, and he noticed that I did not fully trust him. He asked me about this. I frankly replied that we of the catacombs feared not only the agents of the GPU, but also the "Sergianists," who many times had given us over to the GPU. Archbp. Anthony was very upset at this and paced for a long time in the physicians' room to which I had called him as if for an examination, being physician-consultant. Then suddenly he said decisively: "But all the same I will remain with Metr. Sergius." I got up, bowed, and was about to leave. He raised his hand for a blessing, but I, remembering the direction of Vladikas Victor and Maxim, avoided receiving the blessing and left.

When I related what had happened to Vladika Maxim, he affirmed again that I should never take a blessing from persistent "Sergianists." "The Soviet and Catacomb Churches are incompatible," said Vladika Maxim with emphasis, firmly, with conviction, and after a silence added quietly: "The secret Catacomb Church of the wilderness has anathematized the 'Sergianists' and those with them."

DESPITE THE EXTREME strictness of the discipline of the Solovki camp, which meant that they risked being tortured and shot, Vladikas Victor, Ilarion, Nektary, and Maxim not only often concelebrated in secret catacomb services in the forests of the island, but also performed secret consecrations of several new bishops. These were performed in strictest secrecy even from those closest to the candidates, so that in case of arrest and torture they could not give away to the GPU truly secret bishops. Only on the eve of my departure from Solovki I found out from my close friend, a celibate priest, that he was no longer a priest, but a secret bishop.

The common spiritual father of the entire Catacomb episcopate and secular clergy on the island of Solovki was the remarkable confessor, and later also martyr, Archpriest Nicholas Piskanovsky (from the city of Voronezh). Vladika Maxim deeply revered him and called him an "adamant of Orthodoxy." Once Vladika Maxim, with great agitation of soul and heartfelt tears (he was rarely in such a state) showed me a postcard which Fr. Nicholas had received from his wife and young son. On this postcard was written: "We always rejoice, thinking of your sufferings in the camp for Christ and His Church. May you too rejoice that we also have become worthy again and again to be persecuted for the Lord."

At Solovki we had several secret Catacomb "churches," but our "favorites" were two: the "Cathedral Church" of the Holy Trinity, and the church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. The first was a small clearing in the midst of a dense forest in the direction of the "Savvaty" Assignment Area. The dome of this church was the sky. The walls were the birch forest. The church of St. Nicholas was located in the deep forest towards the "Muksolm" Assignment Area. It was a thicket naturally formed by seven large spruces. Most frequently the secret services were conducted here, in the church of St. Nicholas. In the "Holy Trinity Cathedral" services were conducted only in the summer, on great feasts and, with special solemnity, on the Day of Pentecost. But sometimes, depending on circumstances, doubly secret services were celebrated also in other places. Thus, for example, on Great Thursday of 1929, the service of the reading of the Twelve Gospels was celebrated in our physicians' cell in the 10th Company. Vladika Victor and Fr. Nicholas came to us, as if for disinfection. Then, catacomb-style, they served the church service with the door bolted. On Great Friday an order was read in all Companies informing that for the next three days no one would be allowed to leave the Companies after 8 p.m., save in exceptional circumstances and by special written permit of the Camp Commandant.

At 7 p.m. on Friday, when we physicians had just returned to our cells after a 12-hour workday, Fr. Nicholas came to us and told us that a Plashchanitsa (burial shroud with the image of Christ) the size of one's palm had been painted by the artist R. The service — the rite of burial — was to be held and would begin in an hour. "Where?" Vladika Maxim asked. "In the great box for drying fish which is close to the forest, next to Camp N. The password: three knocks and then two. It's better to come one at a time."

In half an hour Vladika Maxim and I left our Company and started out for the indicated "address." Twice the patrols asked for our permits. We, as physicians, had them. But what about the others? — Vladika Victor, Vladika Ilarion, Vladika Nektary, and Fr. Nicholas? Vladika Victor worked as a bookkeeper in the rope factory. Vladika Nektary was a fisherman; and the others weaved nets... Here was the edge of the forest. Here was the box, about nine yards long, without windows, the door scarcely noticeable. Light twilight, the sky covered with dark clouds. We knock three times and then twice. Fr. Nicholas opens. Vladika Victor and Vladika Ilarion are already here... In a few minutes Vladika Nektary also comes. The interior of the box has been converted into a church. On the flour, on the walls, spruce branches. Several candles flickering. Small paper icons. The small *Plashchanitsa* is buried in green branches. Ten people have come to pray. Later another four or five come, of whom two are monks. The service begins, in a whisper. It seemed that we had no bodies, but were only souls. Nothing distracted or interfered with prayer... I don't remember how we went "home," i.e., to our Companies. The Lord covered us!

The bright service of Pascha was assigned to our physicians' cell. Towards midnight, under various urgent pretexts arranged by the medical section, without any kind of written permit, all who intended to come gathered, about fifteen people in all. After the Matins and Liturgy, we sat down and broke the fast. On the table were Paschal cake and cheese, colored eggs, cold dishes, wine (liquid yeast with cranberry extract and sugar). About three o'clock we parted.

Control rounds of our Company were made by the Camp Commandant before and after the services, at 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. Finding us, four physicians headed by Vladika Maxim, on his last round, the Commandant said: "What, doctors, you're not sleeping?" And immediately he added: "Such a night... and one doesn't want to sleep!" And he left.

"Lord Jesus Christ! We thank Thee for the miracle of Thy mercy and power," pronounced Vladika Maxim movingly, expressing our common feelings.

The white night of Solovki was nearing its end. The delicate, rose-colored Paschal morning of Solovki, the sun playing for joy, greeted the monastery-concentration camp, converting it into the invisible city of Kitezh and filling our free souls with a quiet, unearthly joy. Many years have passed since that time, but the fragrant remembrance of this delicate Paschal morning is unforgettably alive; it was literally only yesterday. And the heart believes that among us then was a saint.

Vladika Maxim was especially friendly with Vladika Victor, who was the complete opposite of the bishop-physician. Vladika Victor was short of stature, stout, full of joy, open, accessible, friendly to all, talkative. "One must comfort every man with something," he said, and everyone he met he knew how to "comfort," to make happy, to evoke a smile from him. He came often and conversed long with Vladika Maxim on the destiny of the Russian Orthodox Church. Being an optimist, he constantly tried to "infect" Vladika Maxim with his faith in Russia's bright future; but the latter remained a pessimist, or as he defined himself in the words of K. Leontiev, an "optimistic pessimist." The tragic end of world history draws near, and therefore, according to the word of the Lord, one must "bow one's head" in expectation of the certain triumph of Christ's truth!

On January 21 (February 3), 1930, on the feast of St. Maximus the Confessor (Vladika Maxim's name's day), we physicians got together and bought in our camp store an immense "pontifical"porcelain teacup, of exceedingly fine workmanship, and solemnly presented it as a gift to our dear Vladika. Vladika ate little, but he loved to drink tea. The gift was a great success. This whole day we again spent, as on Pascha, together, in our cell, and Vladika Victor told us much concerning interesting details in the trial of St. Maximus the Confessor. "You are fortunate, Vladika, that you bear the name of such a great heavenly protector and confessor in our day," Vladika Victor concluded his account with heartfelt joy.

On July 5 (18), 1930, on the feast of St. Sergius of Radonezh, our friends in the office of the Sanitarium Division informed me that I would be arrested at night and sent with a "special convoy" to Leningrad, "on new business." Forewarned, I prepared myself, bade farewell to my friends, and, without lying down to sleep, began to await my arrest. Hearing at two in the morning a noise and footsteps downstairs (our cell was on the second floor), I bowed to the ground before Vladika Maxim (who also was not sleeping) and asked him to bless me and pray that the Lord would send me strength to bear the coming sorrows, sufferings, and perhaps torture and death. Vladika stood up, drew himself up in all his Herculean stature (it seemed to me that he had grown and become enormous), slowly blessed me, kissed me three times, and said with emotion: "You will have many sorrows and heavy trials, but your life will be preserved, and in the end you will go out into freedom. But as for me, in a few months they will arrest me also and... shoot me! And you too pray for me, while I am alive, and especially after my death."

Vladika Maxim's prediction was fulfilled precisely. In December of 1930 he was arrested and taken to Moscow. The Russian press abroad in 1931 printed the following notice: "Vatican, Nov. 30. Only today the Vatican Commission 'Pro-Russia' received news of the death of Maxim, Orthodox Bishop of Serpukhov. Bp. Maxim was shot on July 6 by the Bolsheviks for refusing to recognize Metropolitan Sergius, who as is known has been reconciled to the Soviet authority."

Grant rest, O Lord, with the saints, to the soul of Thy slave *Maxim,* first Catacomb bishop of the long-suffering Russian Orthodox Church.

Editors' note: The sanctity of Bishop-martyr Maxim — not only in martyrdom, but in his life as well — shines forth clearly in this first-hand account (text from ORTHODOX PATH, *Jordanville, 1951). A recent proof of this is attested by his niece, who lives in New York. Only this year she was saved from a seemingly impossible situation by undoubted heavenly help, and she writes: "I firmly believe that this was because my uncle prayed for me before the Lord."*

And thus we may believe that the Orthodox Christian of today has a special heavenly intercession in misfortunes and in the approaching trials of faith, both through the Bishop-martyr Maxim and through the whole choir of millions of new martyrs of the atheist communist yoke.

Holy New Martyr Maxim, pray to God for us! Amen.

3

Alexander Jacobson

NEW CONFESSOR OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

Commemorated September 8 (†1930)

They hated Me without a cause
John 15:25

IN THE YEAR 1929, in the frightful concentration camp of Solovki, beginning with the end of winter there was a great increase of scurvy, and towards spring out of 18,000 prisoners of the fourth division of the camp (the division that occupied the island of Solovki itself), the number of those afflicted reached 5000. I, as an imprisoned physician, was offered, apart from my usual work, to take upon myself the supervision of one of the new scurvy barracks for 300 prisoners.

When I came to this barracks I was met by a young Jewish orderly with a very handsome, lively face. He turned out to be a 4th-year medical student. To have such a qualified helper was a great rarity and an immense help. Alexander Yakovlevich Jacobson (such was his name) went around the whole barracks with me and showed me all the patients. Concerning each one, he told me in detail his diagnosis and the characteristic traits of the disease. The patients were all in a very serious condition. Rotting and pussing gums afflicted with the sores of scurvy gangrene, an immense swelling of the joints, bleeding from scurvy in the form of blue spots in the extremities — were what came first to the eyes at a hasty examination. At a more thorough investigation many of them turned out to have serious complications in the inner organs: hemorrhagic nephritis, pleuritis and pericarditis, serious afflictions of the eyes, and so forth. From the explanations of the orderly I understood that he knew precisely what was what in the symptomatology of diseases, and he made correct diagnoses and prognoses.

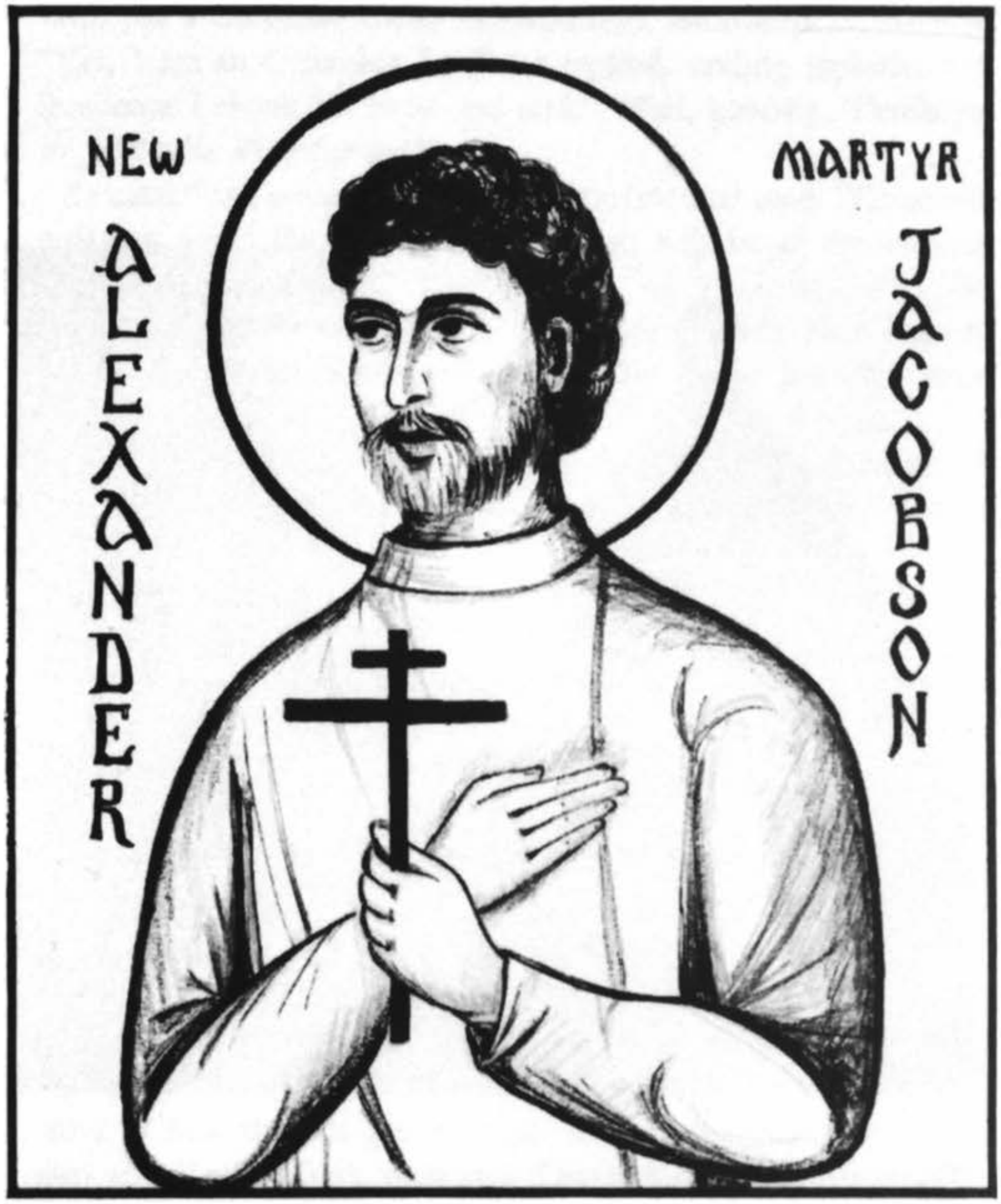
Finding out that Alexander was working without stop 24 hours at a time, I sent him off to rest and began to go about and examine the patients alone. In the histories of their disease were registered all the so-called regular facts, that is, first name, surname, date and place of birth, and so forth; the diagnosis was set forth, and subjective complaints were registered. In view of the immense number of patients, I was forced to examine them very hastily and to make extremely brief notes. Nonetheless, my examination, which began at eight in the morning, ended only at 3 a.m., with two intermissions of one half hour for lunch and supper. The next day I again came to the barracks at eight in the morning and found Alexander, who had already gone about all the patients, filling all my prescriptions and gathering information on the most serious cases. He had worked from 12 noon to 8 a.m., that is, 20 hours, again without stop. His face was puffed and had clear traces of serious blows. In reply to my inquiries he told me the following: At 7 am. the barracks had been visited by the Chief of the Intelligence Division (GPU) in the camp. This Chief was drunk. Going about the patients, he asked them whether they were satisfied with the work of the physician and the orderly. Some of the sick prisoners declared that the doctor had only come late at night, "glanced in" and "quickly" looked at "some" of the patients "without giving any help to the seriously ill," while the orderly had come to work yesterday only at 12 noon.

Without investigating whether these complaints were just or not, and without asking any explanations of the orderly, the Chief hit the latter several times in the face and ordered me, as physician in charge of this section, to come to him at 12 noon "for an explanation."

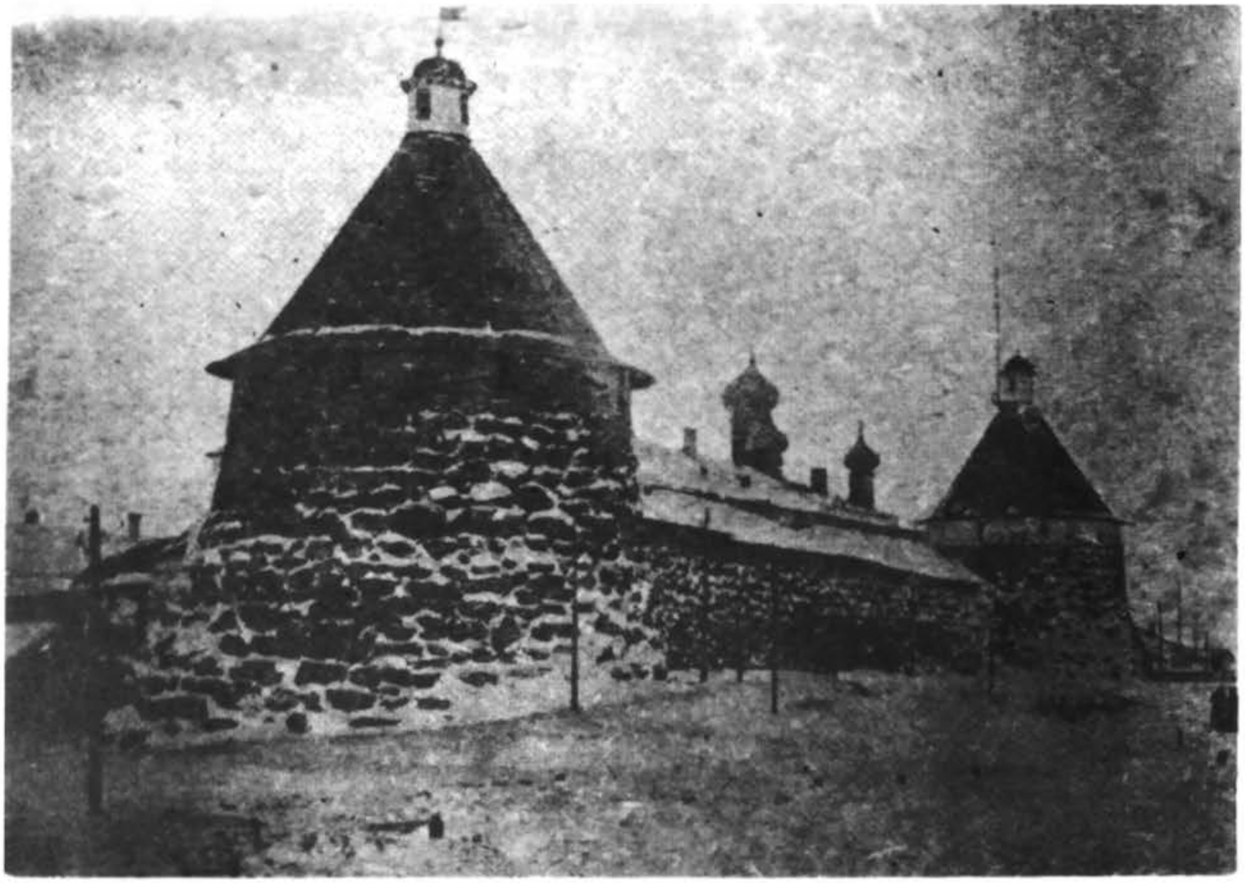
"Alexander Yakovlevich," I addressed the orderly, "I have to go, as you know, for an interrogation. You yourself see how many seriously ill patients there are. Even though your work has already been going on now for a whole 24 hours, could you not work yet another two or three hours until I return (I hope) from the interrogation?"

"Of course, doctor," the orderly replied meekly. "I will remain and look at all the seriously ill."

"Please do, for after all, you see what's what even in the most complicated cases, and I can only thank you warmly for your help. And for my part, I will try to explain to the Chief of the Intelligence Division that he has been unjust to you."


NEW
MARTYR
ALEXANDER
JACOBSON

Alexander Jacobson
(a contemporary iconographic sketch).



The towers of Solovki Monastery in the winter of about 1930, a Communist concentration camp

"Oh, do not disturb yourself about me," the orderly cried out in a lively way, "and do not defend me. I had to suffer much more difficult torments without any kind of guilt and I only thank God for them. Remember what St. John Chrysostom said, 'Glory be to God for all things'."

"Are you a Christian, then?" I asked him, astonished.

"Yes, I am an Orthodox Jew," he replied, smiling joyfully.

In silence I shook his hand and said, "Well, good-by. Thank you. Tomorrow we will talk. Pray for me."

"Be calm," the orderly told me in a confidential tone. "Constantly pray to your guardian angel the whole time that you will be at the interrogation. May God preserve you, Doctor."

I went out. On the way I prayed to the Lord, to His Most Pure Mother, to St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, and especially to my guardian angel, fulfilling the good advice of Alexander.

Going into the office of the Chief of the Intelligence Division, for the last time I mentally addressed my guardian angel with the prayer, "Defend me! Enlighten me!"

The Chief met me in silence, severely. With a finger he pointed to a chair. I sat down.

"Tell me, when did you make the rounds of the patients yesterday, and why did your helper, this Jew orderly, go to work only at lunch time?"

Mentally, without words, I called to my help my guardian angel. Trying to be calm, in a quiet, even voice, without hurrying, I related to him everything in detail. I related that by the directive of the Chief of the Sanitary Division I had come to take the barracks at 8 a.m. Finding out that the orderly, after opening a new ward, receiving 300 patients, and preparing everything needed for my coming, had worked without interruption for a whole day and night, I sent him to rest for several hours while I myself took charge of making the rounds of the patients. My rounds took me from eight in the morning until three at night. And in fact, the last group of patients, in the attic, I examined only between two and three o'clock at night. The orderly, after his uninterrupted 24-hour work shift, after sleeping only three or four hours, again came to work yesterday at 12 noon, and is again working without interruption now for a second 24 hours, right up to this moment.

"Then what are those swine complaining about!" the Chief interrupted me. "Tell those good-for-nothings that I'll put them in solitary confinement!"

"It's not their fault," I replied. "After all, they didn't know the working conditions. They told you the truth, that the orderly came to them in the attic at twelve noon, and that the physician made their rounds only at two in the morning."

"Well," he said, scratching his head and yawning, "well, go."

Coming out of the interrogation, I immediately set out for the barracks-ward. There I found the Chief of the Sanitary Division, a physician who after serving out his term on a criminal charge (for an abortion which ended in death) remained to serve as "freely employed."

The Chief of the Sanitary Division was shouting at the orderly because of something that was out of order. "What an outrage to appear so late for work," he shouted at me. I explained, and he left.

"Why is he so angry at you?" I asked Alexander.

"Because there is a strong odor here. I explained to him that 90 percent of the patients have pussing wounds. Then he cried out, 'Silence!' and then you came in."

"Go and sleep," I told him. "Come at six o'clock in the evening."

For a long time now I had wanted to become better acquainted with Alexander and have a heart-to-heart talk with him; but because we were so extremely busy and exhausted, we could not manage to do this for a long time.

ONCE, HOWEVER, on the Feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God, under the pretext of an inspection of a distant work point, I managed to arrange to get both of us assigned together. Early in the morning I came with him from the Solovki Monastery itself, along the St. Sabbatius Road, and after going several kilometers we went off to the side of this road into a pine forest. It was a marvelous, clear, warm autumn day, such as rarely occur on Solovki. In the rays of the sun the birch trees shone with bright melted gold as large spots in the pine forest. This Levitan-like landscape gave a quiet sadness of spiritual joy to the Feast of the Mother of God. Going into the depths of the forest, I sat down with Alexander on stumps, and I asked him to tell me about himself. Here is what he told me:

The son of a merchant of St. Alexander's Market of Petersburg, he lost his parents early and began to go his own way in life. Being a second-year student of the medical faculty, he became acquainted with and a friend of a certain geologist, a Jew who was a Tolstoyite, who attracted him with his tales of Leo Tolstoy and the teaching of the Tolstoyites. A strong impression was made on

Alexander, not by the theological works of Tolstoy, but by his tales and stories: "God is Where Love Is," "What Men Live By," and others. In a year, being now a third-year student, he became acquainted with an old physician who had known Leo Tolstoy personally. This physician, a convinced Orthodox Christian, explained to Alexander the essence of the Tolstoy sect, and revealed to him "the immeasurable treasury of the Orthodox Church." In another year Alexander was baptised and became an Orthodox Christian.

"After my baptism," Alexander related, "I could not look with indifference on religious Jews. The atheist Jews, as the majority are now, did not interest me much. But those Jews who believed in God began to seem to me as simply unfortunate people in error whom I was morally obliged to bring to Christ. I asked why they were not Christians. Why did they not love Christ?"

The disputes and preaching of the newly-converted Jew became known, and Alexander was arrested.

"At one of the camp assignments," Alexander continued, "where I worked at the very difficult common labors, at lumbering, there was an exceptional beast for a Chief. In the morning and evening, before and after work, he would line up the prisoners and order them to sing 'morning and evening prayers': in the morning the 'International,' and in the evening some kind of Soviet song in which were the words 'All of us as one will die for the power of the Soviets.' Everyone sang, but I couldn't; I was silent. Going about the ranks, the Chief noticed that I was silent, and he began to beat me on the face. Then I sang loudly, unexpectedly even for myself, looking at heaven, 'Our Father Who art in heaven.' This beast of a Chief became possessed with malice, and throwing me to the ground, he beat me unconscious with his heels. After being freed from the camp, I received a 'voluntary exile' to the city of Vyatka."

"Well, and how did you settle yourself in Vyatka?" I asked him.

"When I came to Vyatka, a city totally unknown to me, first of all I asked where the church was. (At that time, all the churches had not yet been closed.) When I came to the church, I asked wheher there was not an icon here of St. Tryphon of Vyatka, and when his memory is celebrated. They showed me an icon, and said that the memory of the Saint was to be celebrated the next day, October 8. My heart leaped from joy that St. Tryphon had brought me to his city for his own feast day. Falling to my knees before the Saint's icon, I told him that I had no friends in Vyatka besides him, and that I had no one else to ask help of. I asked that he might arrange life and work for me in Vyatka.

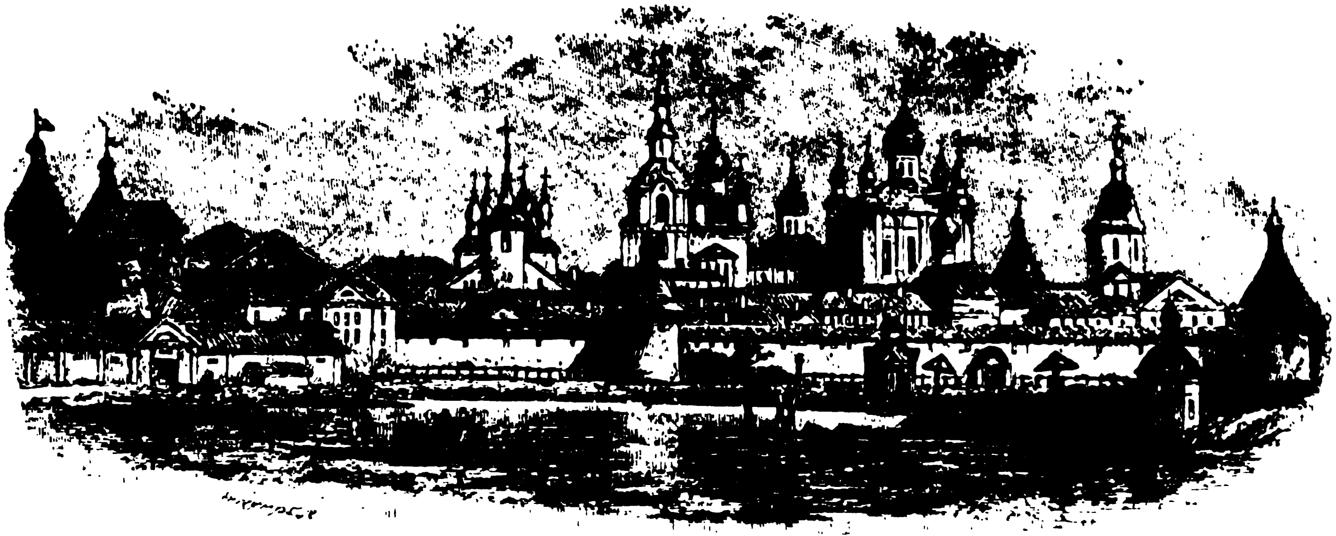
After prayer, my heart felt simple, at ease, and quietly joyful — a true sign that my prayer had been heard. Coming out of the church after the All-night Vigil, I slowly walked along the main street, holding under my arms the little bundle with my things. 'Well, my dear, did you just get out of the hospital?' I suddenly heard a pleasant woman's voice saying. Before me an old, plump lady had stopped, with a clean white scarf on her head, modestly, cleanly and neatly dressed, looking at me with clear, kind eyes. 'No, Matushka,' I replied, 'I haven't come from the hospital; I've come from prison. I was freed from the concentration camp and have been sent to Vyatka.'

" 'Oh, for what crimes did you suffer punishment: for thievery, for robbery, for murder?' 'No, for belief in God, and because, being a Jew, I became a Christian,' I replied. A conversation was struck up. She invited me to come in. In her room everything was clean and orderly, and the whole corner above the bed was hung with icons, before which three lamps of different colors were burning. 'Tomorrow is the memory of Tryphon of Vyatka, the defender and protector of our city,' the woman said, and showed me a little icon of the Saint. I fell down on my knees before it and wept from joyful gratitude. And so I arranged to live with this pious widow, and two days later I found work as a truck driver. So I lived peacefully, glory be to God, for half a year, but in the spring I was arrested again and this time received ten years, and came to this holy island of Solovki. Now it is Sts. Zosimas and Sabbatius who are helping me with their prayers."

In silence I walked further with Alexander into the depths of the forest. And suddenly, totally unexpectedly, we stumbled upon an old, half-ruined stone chapel, with the windows and door boarded up. The boards were old and were easily torn off with a little effort. We went into the chapel and saw on the wall a large old icon of the Smolensk Mother of God. The paint on the icon was chipped off, and only the face of the Mother of God was preserved clearly — as a matter of fact, only Her loving eyes.

Alexander suddenly fell down on his knees before this icon, raising both hands high, and in a loud voice he sang, "Meet it is in truth." He sang the prayer to the end. Something gripped my throat, and I could not sing with my voice; but my whole soul sang and rejoiced, looking at the two pairs of eyes: the loving eyes of the Mother of God, and the contrite eyes of Alexander.

A month after this walk, Alexander was arrested and sent away, no one knows where. The arrest of a prisoner usually ended with the firing squad.



ENGRAVING OF SOLOVKI MONASTERY

(In fact, Prof. S. V. Grotoff, who was in Solovki at that time and knew Alexander Jacobson well as a fellow opponent of Sergianism, testifies that he was shot in 1930.)

Almost forty years have passed since this, and before me there often appears with unforgettable clarity the wondrous picture of the prayer of this Orthodox Jew confessor, before the eyes of the icon of the Mother of God. And I hear his joyful voice resounding with unvanquishable faith and a flaming, deep desire to glorify Her Who is "More honorable than the Cherubim. . ."

4

The Nuns of Shamordino in Solovki Prison

AND THE MIRACLE OF THEIR MANLINESS

Commemorated November 12

> *Upon him who labors—*
> *God sheds mercy; but he who loves*
> *acquires consolation.*
>
> Elder Ambrose of Optina

IN THE SUMMER of 1929 there came to Solovki about thirty nuns. Probably the majority of them were from the monastery of Shamordino, which was near the renowned Optina Hermitage.

The nuns were not placed in the common women's quarters, but were kept separately. When they began to be checked according to the list and interrogated, they refused to give the so-called basic facts about themselves, that is, to answer questions about their surnames, year and place of birth, education, and so forth.

After shouts, threats and beatings they were placed in solitary confinement, and were tortured by hunger, thirst, and deprivation of sleep; that is, all the usual means of pressure were applied to them. But the nuns remained unbending and even were bold enough — a fact very rare in the concentration camp — to refuse any kind of forced labor.

After several days, I, together with Prof. Dr. Zhizhilenko (who had been sent to Solovki because, while being the chief physician of the Taganka prison in Moscow, he had secretly accepted monasticism and had become a bishop with the name of Maxim) were called to the chief of the Sanitary Division. We were confidentially ordered to make a medical examination of the nuns with a hint as to the desireability of recognizing them as unfit for labor so as to have an official basis to free them from forced physical labor.

It was the first time in the history of Solovki that the administration found itself in such a complicated situation. Usually in such cases they acted very severely and cruelly. After a serious beating of those who refused to work, they were sent to the punishment island of Anzersk, from where no one ever returned alive.

Why these rebel nuns were not sent to Anzersk we could not understand. We gave this question to the chief of the Sanitary Division of the whole camp. He explained to us that the silent, restrained protest of the nuns was not in the least like the protests with which the administration was used to dealing. These latter protests were usually accompanied by a scene, shouting and hooliganism. But here, there was silence, simplicity, humility and an extraordinary meekness. "They are fanatical martyrs seeking sufferings," the head of the Sanitary Division explained. "They are some kind of psychic cases, masochists, but one becomes inexpressibly sorry for them. I cannot endure to see the humility and meekness with which they bear the pressure. And it is not I only. Vladimir Yegorovich, the chief of the camp, also could not bear this. He even quarrelled with the chief of the Intelligence Division and he wants somehow to soften and iron over this matter. If you find them unsuitable for physical labor they will be left in peace."

When I went out to the barracks where the nuns were kept, I saw extraordinarily sober women, peaceful and restrained, in old, worn-out, and patched but clean monastic garments.

There were about 30 of them. Their age one could give as an "eternal thirty" years, although undoubtedly there were those both older and younger. In all faces there was something from the expression of the Mother of God, "Joy of All Who Sorrow," and this sorrow was so exalted and modest that totally involuntarily I was reminded of certain verses of Tyuchev. Their meek appearance was of a spiritual beauty which could not but evoke a feeling of deep contrition and awe.

"So as not to upset them, I'd better go out, Doctor," said the chief of the assignment who met me, who should have been present as a representative of the medical committee. I remained alone with them.

"Good day, Matushki," I howed down low to them. In silence they replied to me with a deep how to the waist.

"I am a physician. I've been sent to examine you."

"We are well. You don't need to examine us," several voices interrupted me.

"I am a believing Orthodox Christian and I am sitting here in the concentration camp as a prisoner for church reasons."

"Glory be to God," several voices again replied to me.

"Your disturbance is understandable to me," I continued, "but I will not examine you. You only tell me what you have to complain about and I will assign you to the category of those incapable of labor."

"We are not complaining about anything. We are quite healthy."

"But without a definition of the category of your inability to work, they will send you to extraordinarily difficult labor."

"All the same, we will not work whether it be difficult or easy labors."

"Why?" I asked in astonishment.

"Because we do not wish to work for the regime of Antichrist."

"What are you saying?" I asked, upset. "After all, here on Solovki there are many bishops and priests who have been sent here for their confession. They all work, each one as he is able. Here, for example, there is the bishop of Vyatka who works as a bookkeeper at the rope factory, and in the lumber department many priests work. They weave nets. On Fridays they work the whole 24 hours, day and night, so as to fulfill their quota extra quickly and thus free for themselves a time for prayer in the evening on Saturdays and on Sunday morning."

"But we are not going to work under compulsion for the regime of Antichrist."

"Well then, without examination I will make some kind of diagnosis for you and give the conclusion that you are not capable of hard physical labor."

"No, you needn't do that. Forgive us, but we will be obliged to say that this is not true. We are well. We can work, but we do not wish to work for the regime of Antichrist and we shall not work even though they might kill us for this."

"They will not kill you, but they will torture you to death," I said in a quiet whisper, risking being overheard; I said it with pain of heart.

"God will help to endure the tortures also," one of the nuns said, likewise quietly. Tears came to my eyes.

I bowed down to them in silence. I wished to bow down to the ground and kiss their feet.

In a week the commandant of the Sanitary Division entered the physician's office and, among other things, informed us, "We're all worn out with these nuns, but now they have agreed to work. They sew and patch up clothing for the central ward. Only they made as conditions that they should all be together and be allowed to sing quietly some kind of songs while they work. The chief of the camp has allowed it. There they are now, singing and working."

The nuns were isolated to such an extent that even we, the physicians of the Sanitary Division who enjoyed comparative freedom of movement, and who had many ties and friends, for a long time were not able to receive any kind of news about them. And only a month later we found out how the last act of their tragedy had developed.

From one of the convoys that had come to Solovki, there was brought a priest who turned out to be the spiritual father of some of the nuns. And, although contact between them seemed, under the camp conditions, to be completely impossible, the nuns in some way managed to ask directions from their instructor.

The essence of their questions consisted of the following: "We came to the camp for suffering and here we are doing fine. We are together; we sing prayers; the work is pleasing to us; have we acted rightly that we agreed to work under the conditions of the regime of Antichrist? Should we not renounce even this work?"

The spiritual father replied with an uncategorical prohibition of the work.

And then the nuns refused every kind of work The administration found out who was guilty for this. The priest was shot. But when the nuns were informed about this, they said, "Now no one is able to free us from this prohibition."

The nuns soon became separated and one by one were taken away somewhere.

Despite all our attempts we were not able to find out any more news about them. They disappeared without any trace.

Years later, from the mouth of an American prisoner who was in a slave-labor camp, comes the following supplementary information shedding light on the spiritual outcome of the ascetic firmness of such nuns.

I.M. ANDREYEV

THE MIRACLE OF THE NUNS

WHEN THE CONVERSATIONS turned to religion, as they soon did, I heard of an extraordinary happening, a miracle, which had just occurred in Vorkuta. God indeed was there with us! And the eagerness with which the men told me this story left no doubt as to the fact that the Iron Curtain could not keep God out of a country or out of the minds and hearts of its people.

It was in November of that year, 1950, just after our own arrival, that three nuns reached the camp under sentences of hard labor. The many thousand women prisoners at Vorkuta did not work in the mines but performed other rugged work, and the nuns were assigned to a plant which made bricks for construction work throughout the whole Arctic area of Russia.

When the nuns were first taken to the brick factory, they told the foreman that they regarded doing any work for the Communist regime as working for the Devil and, since they were the servants of God and not of Satan, they did not propose to bow to the orders of their foreman despite any threats he might make.

Stripped of their religious garb, the nuns' faith was their armor. They were ready to face anything and everything to keep their vow and they did face their punishment, a living testimony of great courage. They were put on punishment rations, consisting of black bread and rancid soup, day after day. But each morning when they were ordered to go out to the brick factory, into the clay pits, or to any other back-breaking assignment, they refused. This refusal meant, of course, that they were destined to go through worse ordeals. Angered by their obstinacy and fearing the effect upon the other slave laborers, the commandant ordered that they be placed in strait-jackets. Their hands were tied in back of them and then the rope with which their wrists were bound was passed down around their ankles and drawn up tight. In this manner, their feet were pulled up behind them and their shoulders wrenched backward and downward into a position of excruciating pain.

The nuns writhed in agony but not a sound of protest escaped them. And when the commandant ordered water poured over them so that the cotton material in the strait-jackets would shrink, he expected them to scream from this pressure on their tortured bodies, but all that happened was that they moaned softly and lapsed into unconsciousness. Their bonds were then loosed and they were revived; in due course they were trussed up again, and once more the blessed relief of unconsciousness swept over them. They were kept in this state for more than two hours, but the guards did not dare let the torture go on any longer, for their circulation was being cut off and the women were near death. The Communist regime wanted slaves, not skeletons. They did not transport people all the way to Vorkuta in order to kill them. The Soviet government wanted coal mined. Slave laborers were expendable, of course, but only after years of labor had been dragged out of them. Thus the commandant's aim was to torture these nuns until they would agree to work.

Finally, however, the commandant decided that he was through trying. The nuns were either going to work or he was going to have to kill them in the attempt. He directed that they again be assigned to the outdoor work detail and, if they still refused, that they be taken up to a hummock in the bitter wind of the early Arctic winter, and left to stand there immobile all day long to watch the other women work. They were treated to this torture, too. When the pale light of the short Arctic day at last dawned, they were seen kneeling there and the guards went over expecting to find them freezing, but they seemed relaxed and warm.

At this, the commandant ordered that their gloves and caps be removed so that they would be exposed to the full fury of the wind. All through the eight-hour working day they knelt on that windy hilltop in prayer. Below them, the women who were chipping mud for the brick ovens were suffering intensely from the cold. Many complained that their feet were freezing despite the supposedly warm boots they wore. When in the evening other guards went to the hill to get the nuns and bring them back to the barracks, they expected to find them with frostbitten ears, hands, and limbs. But they did not appear to have suffered any injury at all. Again the next day they knelt for eight hours in the wind, wearing neither hats nor gloves in temperatures far below zero. That night they still had not suffered any serious frostbite and were still resolute in their refusal to work. Yet a third day they were taken out and this time their scarves too were taken away from them.

By this time, news of what was happening had spread throughout all the camps in the Vorkuta region. When at the end of the third day, a day far colder than any we had yet experienced that winter season, the bareheaded nuns were brought in still without the slightest trace of frostbite, everyone murmured that indeed God had brought a miracle to pass. There was no other topic of conversation in the whole of Vorkuta. Even hardened MVD men from other compounds found excuses to come by the brick factory and take a furtive look at the three figures on the hill. The women working in the pits down below crossed themselves and nervously mumbled prayers. Even the commandant was sorely disturbed. If not a religious man, he was at the least a somewhat superstitious one and he knew well enough when he was witnessing the hand of a Power that was not of this earth!

By the fourth day, the guards themselves were afraid of the unearthly power which these women seemed to possess, and they flatly refused to touch them or have anything more to do with them. The commandant himself was afraid to go and order them out into the hill. And so they were not disturbed in their prayers, and were taken off punishment rations. When I left Vorkuta four years later, those nuns were still at the brick factory compound and none of them had done a day's work productive for the Communist regime. They were guarded with awe and respect. The guards were under instructions not to touch them or disturb them. They were preparing their own food and even making their own clothes. Their devotions were carried on in their own way and they seemed at peace and contented. Though prisoners, they were spiritually free. No one in the Soviet Union had such freedom of worship as they.

What their example did to instill religious faith in thousands of prisoners and guards there at Vorkuta, I cannot begin to describe. Later on, when I had the opportunity as a locker-room attendant for the MVD men to talk with some of the more hardened Russian Communists about religion, not one failed to mention the Miracle of the Nuns. (John Noble: I Found God in Soviet Russia, Zondervan, Mich. 1971, pp. 112-117).

5

Matushka Maria of Gatchina

THE CONSOLING CATACOMB ELDRESS

Commemorated January 26 (†1930)

> *Intense sorrows, like gold in the furnace,*
> *purify the soul, give it life,*
> *fortify and temper it.*
> St. Joseph of Petrograd

SOME THIRTY MILES from Petrograd there is the small town of Gatchina, well known to all residents of Petrograd for its gardens, parks and palaces. In this town there lived before the Revolution a nun, Maria, who was known not only by the residents of Gatchina, but by many residents of Petrograd as well. The Revolution of 1917 found Matushka Maria on her sick bed. After suffering encephalitis (inflamation of the brain), she entered the condition of the so-called Parkinson's Disease (named after the physician Parkinson who described this condition): her whole body became as it were chained and immovable, her face anemic and like a mask; she could speak, but she began to talk with half-closed mouth, through her teeth, pronouncing slowly and in a monotone. She was a total invalid and was in constant need of help and careful looking after. Usually this disease proceeds with sharp psychological changes (irritability, a tiresome stubbornness in repeating stereotyped questions, an exaggerated egoism and egocentrism, manifestations of senility, and the like), as a result of which such patients often ended up in psychiatric hospitals. But Mother Maria, being a total physical invalid, not only did not degenerate psychically, but revealed completely extraordinary features of personality and character, not characteristic of such patients: she became extremely meek, humble, submissive, undemanding, concentrated in herself; she became engrossed in constant prayer, bearing her difficult condition without the least murmuring. As if as a reward for this humility and patience, the Lord sent her a gift: *consolation of the sorrowing*. Completely strange and unknown people, finding themselves in sorrows, grief, depression, and despondency, began to visit her and converse with her. And everyone who came to her left consoled, feeling an illumination of their grief, a pacifying of sorrow, a calming of fears, a taking away of depression and despondency. The news of this extraordinary nun gradually spread far beyond the boundaries of the city of Gatchina.

Matushka Maria lived in a little wooden house at the outskirts of the city, where I visited her in March, 1927. While waiting to be received, I examined the numerous photographs in the reception room and noticed two: Metropolitan Benjamin (of Petrograd, the New Martyr) and Metropolitan Joseph (soon to become leader of the "Josephite" movement). Metropolitan Joseph on his photograph had written a touching dedication to Matushka Maria, quoting a large selection from his work *In the Father's Embrace*, while Metropolitan Benjamin had written briefly: "To the deeply-respected sufferer Matushka Maria, who, among many grieving ones, has consoled also me, a sinner. . ."

I had the great good fortune to be present at the manifestation of miracles of healing of grieving souls. A young man, who had grown despondent after the arrest and exile of his priest-father, left Matushka with a joyful smile, having resolved to accept the rank of deacon. A young woman, who was grieving, became radiantly joyful, similarly resolving to become a nun. An elderly man who was suffering deeply over the death of his son left Matushka upright and encouraged. An elderly woman, who had come with tears, left calm and firm.

When I went in to her, I told Matushka Maria that a terrible depression often attacked me, sometimes lasting for several weeks, and that I could find no way to get rid of it.

"Depression is a spiritual cross," she told me; "it is sent to help the penitent who do not know how to repent, that is, who after repentance fall again into the earlier sins. . . And therefore, only two medicines can treat this sometimes extremely difficult suffering of soul. One must either learn to repent and offer the fruits of repentance; or else bear this spiritual cross, one's depression, with humility, meekness, patience, and great gratitude to the Lord, remembering that the bearing of this cross is accounted by the Lord as the fruit of repentance. . . And afer all, what a great consolation it is to realize that your discouragement is the unacknowleded fruit of repentance, an unconscious self-chastisement for the absence of the fruits that are demanded. . . From this thought one should come to contrition, and then the depression gradually melts and the true fruits of repentance will be conceived. . ."

From these words of Matushka Maria it was as if someone had literally made an operation on my soul and removed a spiritual tumor. . .And I left a different man.

About 1930 Matushka Maria was arrested. She was accused of counter-revolutionary propaganda and of participating in a counter-revolutionary organization, according to paragraphs 10 and 11 of Article 58 (of the Soviet criminal code). Her brother also was arrested. The "organization" was composed of only two people. And the "propaganda" against Communism was her gift of consolation in sorrows. Those who were present during the arrest describe a frightful picture of mockery and cruel violence upon the patient sufferer who was paralyzed and incapable of any physical movement. The "politico-religious crime" of Matushka Maria was deepened by her refusal to recognize Metropolitan Sergius after his famous Declaration of 1927, which led to a schism in the Russian Church.

The poor sufferer was dragged by her arms, which were twisted behind her back, along the floor and ground from her bed to the truck by two Chekists . . . Swinging her much-suffering, paralyzed body, the Chekists threw it into the truck and took her away. Her brother was taken away in another automobile, a so-called "black raven" (a black limousine used especially for transporting the victims of arrests made in the deep of night; described by Solzhenitzen in volume one of *The Gulag Archipelago).* The compassionate venerators of Matushka Maria began to bring modest parcels to her in prison. These were accepted for a month. And then, once, they did not accept the parcels and said briefly, "She died in the hospital." (Such helpless patients were usually killed.) The body was not given over.

Her brother, a weak, small, refined gentleman, who had looked after her with self-sacrifice and received visitors, after nine months of investigation received five years imprisonment in a Siberian concentration camp.

6

Archbishop Dimitry of Gdov

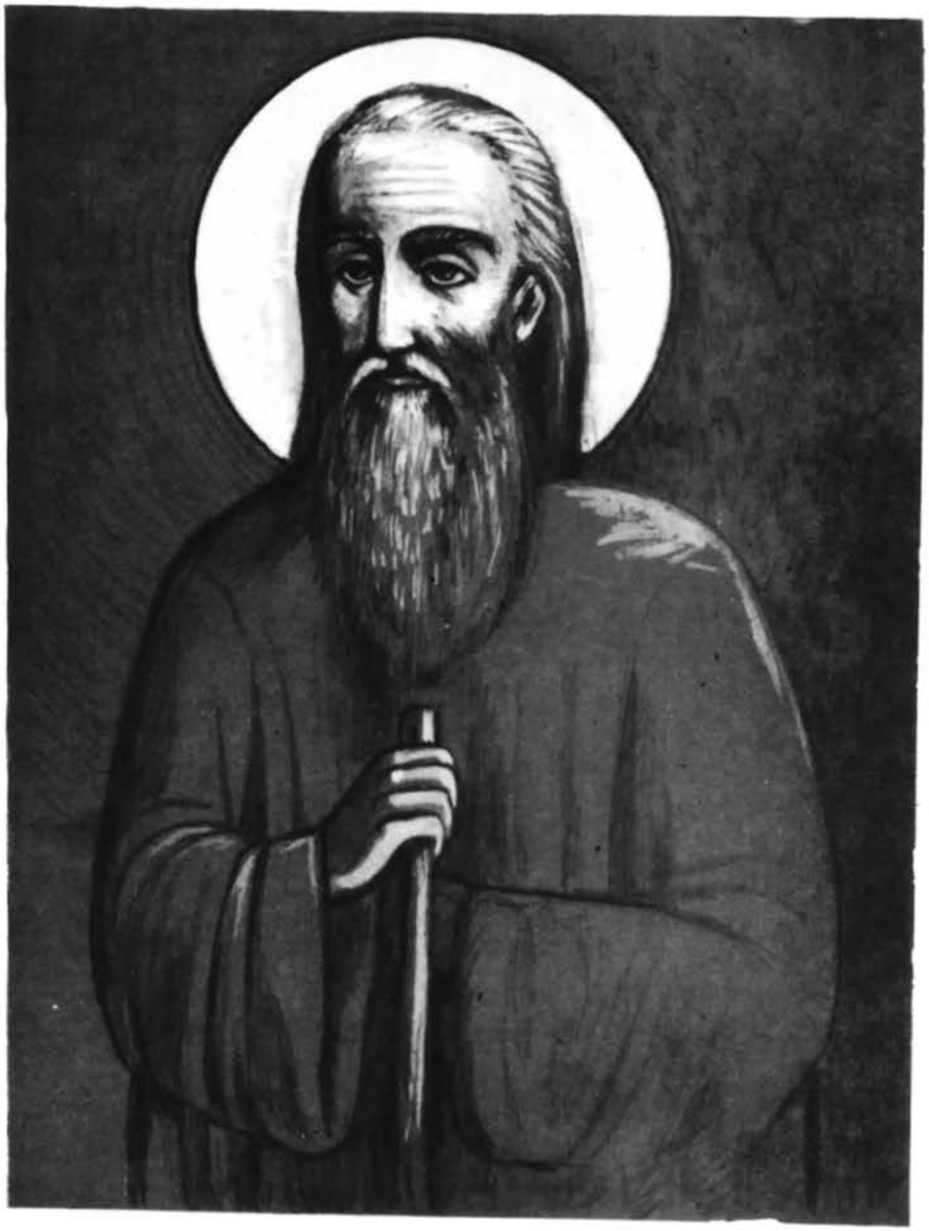
AND HIS PRIEST, NICHOLAS PROZOROV

Commemorated August 6 *(†1938)*

> ***And ye shall know the truth,***
> ***and the truth shall make you free.***
> **St. John 8:32**

SON OF Gabriel Liubimov, the future hierarch-martyr Dimitry was a native of Petersburgh. He graduated from the St. Petersburgh Theological Academy in 1883 and was appointed Psalmist at the Russian church in Stuttgart. The next year he taught at the Theological School in Rostov. In 1886 he was ordained priest and appointed to St. Michael's church in Oranienbaum, and two years later was transferred to St. Petersburgh to the big parish church of the Protection of the Mother of God, where he served for over 30 years. This church conducted a wide range of charitable works. it ran an orphanage, old age homes, schools, etc. It was located near Senniy marketplace in a neighborhood that was made famous by Dostoyevsky's writings, where the poor and outcasts of society were to be found. Fr. Dimitry had great love for the poor and unfortunate people of this parish, and this love and his unselfish labors for them well justified his surname Liubimov, "beloved."

After the Revolution Fr. Dimitry became a widower, but the trying times of the Russian Golgotha did not cause his faith to waver. On the contrary he became an ardent defender of the truth of Christ, now as a bishop. The shocking execution of the Metropolitan of Petersburgh, Benjamin, in August, 1922, was followed by the arrest of all four of his vicar bishops, and the old capital remained for four years without a chief hierarch. In 1926 Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk, himself already arrested, appointed, as a successor to the martyred Metropolitan Benjamin, Archbishop Joseph (Petrovykh), raising



Archbishop Dimitry of Gdov
(a contemporary iconographic sketch)

Archbishop Dimitry of Gdov
when Archpriest in Petersburg

him to the rank of Metropolitan. Two other bishops were released from prison, and several new episcopal consecrations followed immediately, one of them being that of Father Dimitry. He was tonsured a monk bearing the same name of Dimitry, but with a new patron saint, and was made vicar of the Petersburgh diocese.

To the joy of the faithful in August, 1926, the new Metropolitan, Joseph, was to arrive at his See and serve with his vicars the vigil service for the feast of the capital's patron, St. Alexander Nevsky. I shall never forget— writes Alexei Rostov, an eyewitness of the events of this period and a member of the Catacomb Church for many years, who has supplied all the information that follows — that vigil service on August 29 in the Cathedral Church of the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra, when seven vicar bishops served with Metropolitan Joseph. The akathist was sung by all the bishops and the people with a single heart and soul before an icon of St. Alexander which contained a small part of his relics. We had not had such a solemn service in Petrograd since 1917. But soon great trials were to engulf us, caused by the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius.

Metropolitan Joseph did not recognize the Declaration and was followed by Bishop Dimitry and a group of bishops, clergy, and laymen. One of the priests in this group, a future co-martyr with Bishop Dimitry, was the ardent young Fr. Nicholas Prozorov. After the historic Petrograd Delegation (see page 96) Metropolitan Joseph, then already banished, raised Bp. Dimitry to the rank of Archbishop and temporary head of the Petrograd Diocese. Metropolitan Sergius thereupon placed Archbishop Dimitry under interdict, and in his ukase concerning this on January 17, 1928, he showed his mercilessness to the confessors of genuine Orthodoxy, stating that for insubordination "our Church threatens direct excommunication and anathema, depriving those guilty of even the right to appeal to a conciliar judgement," saying further that "no sacraments may be received from them nor any private services, for anyone who enters into ecclesiastical communion with the excommunicated and interdicted and prays with them, even at home, is likewise declared to be excommunicated."

Archbishop Dimitry, fearlessly following in the footsteps of Metropolitan Joseph, refused to accept this or any other decrees coming from Metropolitan Sergius, recognizing that by his "adaptation to atheism" he had placed himself in schism from the Russian Church. The GPU (secret police), seeking to increase strife within the Church, at first took no action against the "Josephites"; but soon the first blow fell with the arrest in 1928 of the young and gifted theologian, Professor Father Theodore Andreev, who after suffering in prison died in April, 1929. Archbp. Dimitry, who had called him an "adamant of Orthodoxy" for his righteous criticism of Bulgakov, Berdyaev, and other pseudo-Orthodox thinkers, celebrated his solemn funeral service. In November, 1929, he was himself arrested together with Fr. Nicholas Prozorov and other clergy and laymen for refusing to recognize the "Declaration." I was myself a member of this group and was held in cell no. 9 in the "House of Preliminary Confinement" at 25 Voinova (Shpalernaya) St. in Leningrad.

On April 10, 1930, four of us were moved to another prison cell, no. 21, where there were 20 cots and 80 to 100 prisoners to share them, whereas in the previous cell there had been 14 cots to 35 or 45 men. Here I met the young priest, Fr. Nicholas Prozorov. There was also another priest, Fr. John, as well as Fr. Nicholas Zagorovsky, a holy man of 75 who had been brought from Kharkov also in connection with the Declaration of Metr. Sergius.

At this time Archbishop Dimitry was also in this prison, in solitary confinement, and once I chanced to see him while we were carrying out a very heavy box filled with garbage. A guard accompanied us. As we came out into the prison courtyard, Vladika Dimitry was returning from his ten-minute walk, also accompanied by a guard. It was a warm July evening, and I could see him clearly. He was a tall, husky old man in a rasson with a thick white beard, slightly pink cheeks, and blue eyes. He did not wear a panagia in the prison. Here was a true confessor of our much-suffering Catacomb Church!

The priests who had spent the longest time in this cell occupied a corner near the grating, separated by a cardboard partition from the rest of the cell; this was called the "holy corner," and here they slept side by side, and in the morning they would serve the Typica, and in the evening Vespers —or, before a feast, the All-night Vigil. They would sit in a row on stools, two or three laymen would join them, and they would listen to the whole service, which was read from memory in a low voice. The other prisoners pretended not to notice anything. Here I spent my first Pascha in prison. Although I was warned by a good friend of mine not to go to the 'holy corner,' for which I could easily get some years added to my sentence, I still could not resist, and I went there when Fr. Nicholas began to sing the opening Paschal hymn: *Thy Resurrection, O Christ Saviour, angels hymn in heaven;*

vouchsafe to us on earth with pure heart to glorify Thee. Other priests seconded him, and thus we had the whole joyous service. As I returned to my mattress I saw how many of the prisoners were still crossing themselves, tears streaming down their unshaven cheeks. Everyone in the cell had carefully followed our service in silence.

Here in the cell I learned the "life" of my fellow inmate, Fr. Nicholas. He was of medium height, dark skinned, with rather crude features, dark eyes and hair, and a small beard. He was a simple man, not a learned intellectual, but with a deep faith and firm in his confession; and thus he believed that in joyfully accepting martyrdom, he thereby opened for himself entry into the kingdom of heaven. He was born in 1896 and went to a seminary, but in 1915 he quit and, just 18 years old, went as a volunteer to the front. The Revolution found him a sub-lieutenant. After returning from the front to his native Voronezh, he was arrested and accused together with others of a "conspiracy" during the frightful years of the civil war, and he was condemned to be shot. Finding himself in a common cell with a group of condemned officers, he proposed to the believers that they read aloud the akathist to St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, the defender of the unjustly condemned. By chance he had a copy of the akathist with him. Some of the officers agreed and went aside and quietly sang the akathist. Another group, evidently those officers who were unbelievers or were not devout, took no part in this prayer. And an extraodrinary miracle occurred that shook the soul of the young officer Prozorov to its foundations: in the morning, all who had read the akathist were saved from execution and given instead various terms of imprisonment, while the other officers were all shot. Prozorov gave a vow to become a priest as soon as he should get out of prison, and finding himself freed before too long, he fulfilled his vow. He was ordained by Archbishop John (Pommer), who was later bestially murdered by Bolshevik terrorists in Riga on October 12, 1934.

The GPU, however, forbade Fr. Nicholas to remain in Voronezh, and he went to Petrograd, where he served in the small church of St. Alexander Oshenevsky on the outskirts of the city near the Piskareva railway station.

Once one of the leading communists of Leningrad came to him and asked him to marry him and a girl who refused to live with him without a Church marriage. "Your church is in the forest, no one will find out," he said, since as a communist he would be excluded from the Party for having a Church marriage. Fr. Nicholas agreed and told him to prepare for Holy Communion in advance. The communist became angry and said: "I'll indulge a girl's whim, but I don't recognize any confession. Marry us right away! I'll pay whatever you want, more than you earn in a year. While I am alive, no one will arrest you. After all, I'm a member of the Central Committee of the Party!" Thus did the Party member, whose name was known throughout Russia, threaten Fr. Nicholas. But the latter refused, and thus remained in need wth his family, depriving himself of an opportunity to obtain a powerful defender with weight in the Kremlin.

In the morning of August 4, many in our cell were called out, as ever to the corridor, and we were told to sign that we had read our sentences: some received five years, some ten. Only Fr. Nicholas was not called out to hear his sentence. The next morning during the exercise period we found out by a complicated set of signs that Archbishop Dimitry, at the age of 75, had received ten years in the isolation prison. I never saw him again.

The next day all those who had been sentenced were summoned to the station and bade farewell to us. Fr. Nicholas did not know whether to rejoice or be sad. If he had been acquitted, most likely he would have been freed. But everything soon became clearer: there was another reason why he had been as it were forgotten until his friends had been sent off.

The whole day of August 5|18, the eve of the Transfiguration, I tried not to leave Fr. Nicholas, who immediately felt himself alone with the departure of his friends.

Out of the hundreds of prisoners, most of them did not know what it was all about, and others thought that it was an indication that he was to be freed. He alone read, from memory, the All-night Vigil for the Transfiguration, and I listened; other laymen who usually listened had already been sent off to concentration camps — the people in a cell are always being changed. He took out of the pocket of his cassock a photograph of his three daughters, aged 6, 4, and 2; and, fondly looking at them, he said to me: "I believe that the Lord will not forsake these orphans in the terrible Bolshevik world."

The usual preparations for the night began about 9 p.m. The eldest in time spent in the cell lay down on cots, the rest on tables and on benches formed of stools, and newcomers under the tables and cots. My cot was by the window, and Fr. Nicholas' was by the grating which separated us from the corridor. When all had lain down, the officer on duty appeared and stood in the corridor at the door of the grating: "Prozorov — here?"

"Yes.— that's me"; Father Nicholas jumped up from his bed.

"Name and patronymic?" the officer asked, checking with his list.

"Nicholas Kiriakovich," Batiushka answered, getting dressed.

"Get ready with your things."

Fr. Nicholas understood everything. Many times we had observed together how the officer on duty would summon people for execution.

Fr. Nicholas began to get dressed quickly and to pack a straw box with his prison "property." I lay at the other end of the cell and could not get to him through the room, which was blocked with tables, benches, cots, and with bodies lying everywhere. But from the lighted corner where he was packing, I could clearly see his courageous, black-bearded face, which was shining from some unearthly joy. He was 33 years old, like the Saviour when he mounted Golgotha. The whole room became quiet and everyone watched Fr. Nicholas. On the other side of the grating the officer did not take his eyes off him. Fr. Nicholas with a joyful smile looked at all of us and quickly went to the grating, which the officer opened for him. On the threshold he turned to us and said loudly: "The Lord is calling me to Him, and now I will be with Him."

In silence, shaken by the greatness of soul of this modest pastor, we all looked and saw how the grating shut after him, and how with a quick gait he went in front of the officer, who followed him. We all began to speak of Fr. Nicholas in a whisper, with great feeling. Not only believers, but atheists as well — Trotskyites, Mensheviks, bandits, and just plain Soviet rogues — were inspired with reverence and deep feeling by his firm faith.

On the next visiting day, the prisoners who returned from meeting their relatives told us that the priests' wives had been informed of the sentences against their husbands. And then we found out that Fr. Nicholas had been shot on that eve of the Transfiguration, August 6, 1930.

The fate of Bishop Dimitry was similar, although we do not know the date on which he received his martyr's crown. After eight years of solitary confinement in the Yaroslavl isolation prison he was shot in 1938.

The holy martyrs who died for Christ by the hundreds and thousands in ancient times were glorified by the Church without any special procedure of canonization. Likewise today, when countless sufferers are being crowned with the glory of martyrs, no one need hesitate to recognize them as glorified saints, our intercessors before God. May they strengthen us now as the terrible hour of trial of our faithfulness to Christ draws near.

O holy Martyrs Dimitry and Nicholas, together with all the countless heavenly host of the sufferers of the new catacombs, pray to God for us!

THE HISTORIC PETROGRAD DELEGATION OF 1927
AN INTERVIEW WITH METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

THE INFAMOUS DECLARATION of Metropolitan Sergius, issued on July 16|29, 1927, gave a profound shock to the entire Russian Orthodox world. From every corner of the Russian land there resounded the voices of protest of clergy and laymen. A mass of "Epistles" was sent to Metropolitan Sergius, and copies of them were sent throughout the land. The authors of these "Epistles" implored Metropolitan Sergius to renounce the ruinous path he had chosen.

After a whole torrent of such "Epistles" of protest, an unending file of delegations began to stream to Metropolitan Sergius in Moscow.

One of such countless delegations was the historic Delegation of the Petrograd Diocese, which came to Moscow on November 27, 1927, being composed of the following members: His Grace Dimitry Liubimov, Bishop of Gdov (Vicar of the Petrograd Diocese), Archpriest Victorin Dobronravov, Prof. I. M. Andreev (myself), and C. A. Alexeev. Bishop Dimitry represented Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and had with him a long letter that had been signed by seven bishops who were in Petrograd (among whom, besides Metropolitan Joseph and Bishop Dimitry, were Bp. Gabriel, Bp. Stephen, and. Bp. Sergius of Narva). Archpriest Dobronravov represented a numerous group of Petrograd clergy and had with him a letter from them, which was signed by Archpriest Professor F. K. Andreev. I represented the academic circles and brought a letter from a group of academicians and professors of the Academy of Sciences, the University, and other higher institutions of learning; the letter had been composed by Professor S. S. Abramovich-Baranovsky (formerly of the Academy of Military Jurisprudence) and Professor M. A. Novoselovy (the well-known publisher and editor of the "Library of Religion and Morals," who was then secretly living in Petrograd and Moscow). S. A. Alexeev represented the broad masses of the people.

Despite the fact that the Petrograd Delegation came to Moscow after many other delegations that had come with the same purpose, it was received without waiting its turn. The Delegation's interview with Metropolitan Sergius lasted for two hours.

After going in to Metropolitan Sergius, all members of the Delegation went up to him to receive his blessing, introduced themselves and testified that they had come as faithful children of the Orthodox Church.

When Metropolitan Sergius had finished reading the letters that had been brought to him (from the episcopate, from the clergy, and from the laity), Bishop Dimitry — who was 70 years old — fell to his knees before him and exclaimed in tears: "Vladika! Listen to us, in the name of Christ!"

Metropolitan Sergius immediately raised him up from his knees, seated him in an armchair, and said in a firm and somewhat irritated voice: "What is there to listen to? Everything you have written has been written by others earlier, and to all this I have already replied many times clearly and definitely. What remains unclear to you?!"

"Vladika!" began Bishop Dimitry in a trembling voice with copious tears — "At the time of my consecration you told me that I should be faithful to the Orthodox Church and, in case of necessity, that I should be prepared to lay down my own life as well for Christ. And now such a time of confession has come and I wish to suffer for Christ; but you, by your Declaration, instead of a path to Golgotha propose that we stand on the path of collaboration with a God-fighting regime that persecutes and blasphemes Christ; you propose that we rejoice with its joys and sorrow with its sorrows... Our rulers strive to annihilate religion and the Church and rejoice at the destruction of churches, rejoice at the successes of their anti-religious propaganda. This joy of theirs is the source of our sorrow. You propose that we thank the Soviet government for its attention to the needs of the Orthodox population. But how is this attention expressed? In the murder of hundreds of bishops, thousands of priests, and millions of faithful. In the defilement of holy things, the mockery of relics, in the destruction of an immense number of churches and the annihilation of all monasteries. Surely it would be better if they did not give us such 'attention'!"

"Our government" — Metropolitan Sergius suddenly interrupted Bp. Dimitry — "has persecuted the clergy only for political crimes."

"That is a slander!" Bishop Dimitry cried out heatedly.

"We wish to obtain a reconciliation of the Orthodox Church with the governing regime," Metropolitan Sergius continued with irritation, "while you are striving to underline the counter-revolutionary character of the Church... Consequently, you are counter-revolutionaries, whereas we are entirely loyal to the Soviet regime!"

"That is not true!" exclaimed Bishop Dimitry heatedly. "That is another slander against the confessors, martyrs, those who have been shot and those who are languishing in concentration camps and in banishment... What counter-revolutionary act did the executed Metropolitan Benjamin perform? In what lies the 'counter-revolution' in the position of Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk?!"

"And the Sobor of Karlovtsy, in your opinion, also did not have a political character?" Metropolitan Sergius interrupted him again.

"There was no Sobor of Karlovtsy in Russia," Bishop Dimitry replied quietly, "and many martyrs in the concentration camps knew nothing of this Sobor."

"I personally," continued Bishop Dimitry, "am a completely apolitical man, and if I myself had to accuse myself to the GPU, I couldn't imagine anything of which I am guilty before the Soviet regime. I only sorrow and grieve, seeing the persecution against religion and the Church. We pastors are forbidden to speak of this, and we are silent. But to the question whether there is any persecution against religion and the Church in the USSR, I could not reply otherwise than affirmatively. When they proposed to you, Vladika, to write your Declaration, why did you not reply like Metropolitan Peter, that you can keep silence, but cannot say what is untrue?"

"And where is the untruth?" exclaimed Metropolitan Sergius.

"In the fact," replied Bishop Dimitry, "that persecution against religion, the 'opium of the people' according to the Marxist dogma, not only exists among us, but in its cruelty, cynicism, and blasphemy has passed all limits!"

"Well, we are fighting with this," remarked Metropolitan Sergius, "but we are fighting legally, and not like counter-revolutionaries... And when we shall have demonstrated our completely loyal position with regard to the Soviet regime, the results will be even more noticeable. Probably we will be able, as a counterbalance to the *Atheist*, to publish our own little religious journal..."

"You have forgotten, Vladika," remarked Archpriest Dobronravov, "that the Church is the Body of Christ, and not a consistory with a 'little journal' under the censorship of an atheist regime!"

"It is not our political, but our religious conscience that does not permit us to join ourselves to your Declaration," I noted.

"I wish to suffer for Christ, and you propose that we renounce Him," said C. A. Alexeev with bitterness.

"And so you want a schism?!" Metropolitan Sergius asked threateningly. "Do not forget that the sin of schism is not washed away even by the blood of martyrdom! The majority is in agreement with me," he added authoritatively.

"Voices must be weighed, not counted, Vladika," I objected. "After all, Metropolitan Peter, the lawful Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, is not in agreement with you; nor are Metropolitans Agathangel, Cyril, and Joseph; nor such lamps as Metropolitan Arsenius, Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich, Archbishop Pachomius, Bishops Victor, Damaskin, Avercius, and many others; nor the Elders of Optina, nor the prisoners of Solovki..."

"Truth is not always where the majority is," remarked Archpriest Dobronravov; "otherwise the Saviour would not have spoken of the 'little flock.' And the head of a Church has not always turned out to be on the side of Truth. It is sufficient to recall the time of Maximus the Confessor."

"By my new church policy I am saving the Church," Metropolitan Sergius replied deliberately.

"What are you saying, Vladika!" all members of the Delegation exclaimed with one voice. "The Church does not have need of salvation," added Archpriest Dobronravov; "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. You yourself, Vladika, have need of salvation throngh the Church."

"I meant that in a different sense," replied Metropolitan Sergius, somewhat disconcerted.

"And why, Vladika, did you order that a prayer for the regime be introduced into the Liturgy, while at the same time you forbade prayer for 'those in prisons and in banishment'?" I asked.

"Do I really have to remind you of the well-known text of the Apostle Paul concerning the authorities?" Metropolitan Sergius asked with irony.

"And as for the prayer for 'those in banishment,' many deacons make a demonstration out of this."

"And when, Vladika, will you change the Beatitudes in the Liturgy?" I again objected; "after all, one can make a demonstration out of them, too."

"I am not altering the Liturgy," Metropolitan Sergius said drily.

"And who needs the prayer for the regime? Certainly the atheist Soviet regime does not need it. And believers could pray only in the sense of the entreaty 'for the softening of the hard hearts of our rulers,' or 'for the enlightenment of those in error.' But to pray for an anti-Christian regime is impossible."

"Really! — What kind of Antichrist do you find here?" replied Metr. Sergius with a disdainful gesture of the hand.

"But the spirit is precisely that of Antichrist," I insisted. "And what called forth this prayer? Did they force you to introduce this petition?"

"Well, I myself found it necessary."

"No, Vladika, answer as before God, from the depths of your archpastoral conscience: did they force you to do this, as with much else in your 'new church policy,' or not?"

This question had to be repeated stubbornly and persistently many times, before Metr. Sergius finally replied: "Well, so they press one, and force one — but I myself think that way, too," he concluded hastily and fearfully.

"And why, Vladika, did you order that right after the name of Metr. Peter your own name be commemorated? We have heard that this also was ordered from higher up, with the intention of soon omitting the name of Metr. Peter altogether." Metr. Sergius did not reply to this. (In 1936 the commemoration of Metr. Peter, who died in 1937 or 1938, was prohibited.)

" And who appointed your 'Temporary Patriarchal Synod'? And who has occupied himself with the appointment and transference of bishops? Why was Metr. Joseph (of Petrograd) removed against the wishes of his flock? We know, Vladika, that all this is done by the unofficial 'ober-procurator' of your Synod, the Communist secret police agent Tuchkov, against your wishes."

"Where did you take all that from?" Metr. Sergius asked, somewhat disconcerted.

"Everyone knows it, Vladika."

"And with whom have you surrounded yourself, Vladika?" added

Archpriest Dobronravov. "The very name of Bishop (later 'Patriarch') Alexei Simansky is enough to discredit your whole Synod."

Metropolitan Sergius stood up and said that he would think about everything we had said and give a short written reply in three days. The audience was finished. In three days Metr. Sergius gave a written reply, repeating in general and nebulous expressions the theses of his Declaration.

The delegation returned to Petrograd. And in a short time a schism occurred. To those who broke off communion with Metr. Sergius, the latter replied by interdictions; the organs of the secret police cynically helped him.

The members of the Petrograd Delegation were soon arrested and suffered terribly. The aged Bp. Dimitry was put in the Yaroslavl political isolation ward for ten years, and then was shot. Archpriest Dobronravov was sent to a Siberian concentration camp for ten years, and then was sentenced to ten more years, without right of correspondence. I was sent to the concentration camp at Solovki. S. A. Alexeev, after becoming a priest, was shot.

The true Russian Orthodox Church went into the catacombs, where it remains to the present day as an invisible city of Kitezh, preserving itself as the unspotted Bride of Christ.

THE SEPARATION OF BISHOP DIMITRY OF GDOV AND THE FAITHFUL OF PETROGRAD

Document of December 14 (27), 1927

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

THIS IS *the testimony of our conscience* (II Cor. 1: 12): It is no longer permissible for us, without sinning against the canons of the Holy Orthodox Church, to remain in ecclesiastical communion with the Substitute of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens — Sergius, Metropolitan of Nizhegorod, and his Synod, and with all who think as they do. It is not out of pride — let this never be — but for the sake of peace of conscience that we disavow the person and the deeds of our former head, who has unlawfully and immoderately gone beyond his rights and has introduced great disturbance and the "smoky arrogance of the world" into the Church of Christ, whose duty is to bring to those who desire to see God the light of simplicity and the tribute of wisdom in humility (from the Epistle of the African Council to Pope Celestine.)

And we decide upon this only after we have received testimony from the hands of Metropolitan Sergius himself that the new direction and orientation of Russian ecclesiastical life which he has undertaken is not subject to any change.

Therefore, remaining by God's mercy in everything the obedient children of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, and preserving the Apostolic succession through the Patriarchal Locum Tenens Peter, Metropolitan of Krutitsk, we break off canonical communion with Metropolitan Sergius and with all who are under him; and until the judgement of a "complete Local council," i.e., with the participation of all Orthodox bishops, or until the open and complete repentance of the Metropolitan himself before the Holy Church, we preserve communion in prayer only with those who watch *lest the canons of the Fathers be transgressed... and lest imperceptibly and little by little we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has given us as a free gift by His Own Blood* (8th Canon of the Third Ecumenical Council). Amen.

Dimitry, Bishop of Gdov

LETTER OF BISHOP DIMITRY OF GDOV, TEMPORARY HEAD OF THE PETROGRAD DIOCESE, TO THE PRIESTS OF THE DIOCESE

Document of January 4 (17), 1928

Dear Fathers in the Lord,

IN ANSWER TO your petition of December 30, OS, which was addressed to my unworthiness, I reply that with love I accept you into communion in prayer with myself and under my archpastoral leadership, and I earnestly beg your holy prayers for me, a sinner, that the Lord God, in the wealth of His grace, may grant us to remain faithful to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, accepting as our head in the order of the earthly ecclesiastical hierarchy the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, Peter, Metropolitan of Krutitsk, until such time as a complete Local Council of the Russian Church, at which there will be represented the entire active episcopate—i.e., the present exiles-confessors — shall justify by its conciliar authority our way of acting, or until such time as Metropolitan Sergius will come to himself and repent of his sins not only against the canonical order of the Church, but also dogmatically against her person (blaspheming the sanctity of the exploit of her confessors by casting doubt on the purity of their Christian convictions, as if they were mixed up with politics), against her conciliarity (by his and his Synod's acts of coercion), against her apostolicity (by subjecting the Church to worldly rules and by his inner break — while preserving a false unity — with Metropolitan Peter, who did not give Metropolitan Sergius authorization for his latest acts, beginning with the epistle (Declaration) of July 16|29, 1927). *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions* (II Thes. 2: 15).

Dimitry, Bishop of Gdov

SOURCES: *"Interview"*: ST. VLADIMIR RUSSIAN NATIONAL CALENDAR, 1960; *Epistles of Bp. Dimitry*: *no.* 7, IBID., 1964; *no.* 8,*Protopresbyter M. Polsky,* RUSSIA'S NEW MARTYRS, *vol.* 2, *p.* 9. *The material on Bp. Dimitry, etc., in the following article is by Prof. S. Nesterov* (*Alexei Rostov*), *parts of which have appeared in* RUSSIA'S NEW MARTYRS, *pp.* 138-44, *and in the* VESTNIK *of the Canadian Archdiocese, Easter*, 1971.

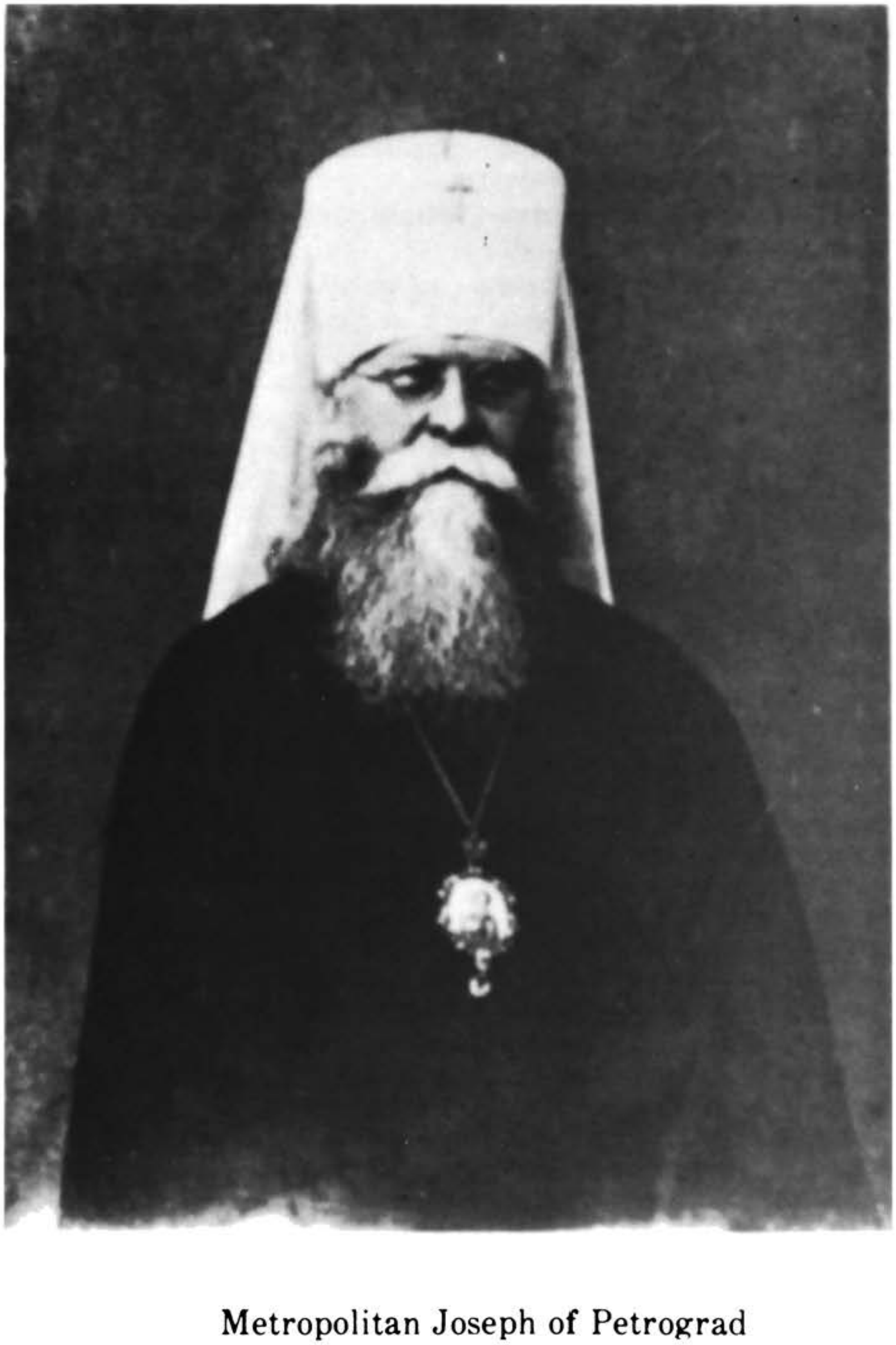
II

The Founding Fathers of the Catacomb Church and their Documents

My fear and trembling increase all the more
at the thought that, while the strength and
of the leaders of the Church of Christ today
are far from rivalling those of the Apostles,
they must do battle with considerably stronger
enemies and overcome considerably more powerful
obstacles and difficulties in this service.
Metropolitan Joseph

Behold the bloody wounds on the bodies
of the absolute prisoners of Christ's love—
wounds lifted up with a meek prayer for their
torturers on their lips and with the
shining of an unearthly joy on their faces!

Behold all the horrors of persecution,
torments, tortures—every kind and every
endurance of death by means of which hell has
attempted to unbalance the emissaries of the
Crucified One, only deepening thereby its
own defeat and disgrace!
Metropolitan Joseph



Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd

Metropolitan Joseph, young Bishop of Uglich

7

Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd

AND THE BEGINNING OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH

Commemorated Dec. 15 (†1938)

> *And fear not them which kill the body, but are*
> *not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him*
> *which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
> St. Matthew 10: 28

IN THE HISTORY of the Church of Christ there have been several critical moments when the official leadership of a Local Church has fallen away from Orthodoxy, and for a time the faithful hesitate, uncertain whom to follow, or where the Church Herself is to be found. At such times Christ our Lord, faithful to His promise that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against* His Church (St. Matt. 16: 18), raises up a champion to speak the truth and rally the faithful to the side of Orthodoxy. At the dawn of the modern age such a champion was St. Mark of Ephesus, who alone of the hierarchs of the Greek Church fearlessly condemned the impious Council and pseudo-Union of Florence and awakened the Orthodox faithful to the realization that the Church of Rome had fallen into heresy, and those who united themselves to it thereby placed themselves outside the Church of Christ.

In our own century, when a yet more formidable enemy of the Church appeared in the form of the pseudo-religious totalitarianism of atheistic Communism ; and when the acting head of the Russian Church, Metropolitan Sergius, proclaimed with his Declaration in 1927 the principle of practical and ideological cooperation with the forces of anti-Christianity — then God raised up, at the head of a veritable army of confessors, a champion in the person of Metropolitan Joseph to oppose and accuse this soul-destroying "legalization" and lead the movement of the faithful of the true Russian Orthodox Church into the catacombs.

THE LIFE OF Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) before the Revolution is largely unknown to us, although its general features may be discovered in his writings, which began to appear in the Russian religious press around the turn of the century. Thus we know that he was born, approximately between 1870 and 1875, in Novgorod province in the area of Tikhvin, famous for its wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God, for which the future hierarch had great veneration. In 1899 he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and perhaps it was there that the spark of his Orthodox faith was first kindled into a flame of ardent desire to serve Christ's Church. After spending the whole night of June 18 in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he emerged at dawn and, walking through the deserted streets of Jerusalem, he was filled with the noblest feelings: "It was so good, as it is only at Pascha, when you return home after the service, burning with the desire to embrace the whole world, to renounce the earth, to fly somewhere far, far away, into the depth and breadth of the boundless heavens!..." All his life he was to remain faithful to this Christ-inspired enthusiasm of his youth. Years later, sharpened by ascetic labors and refined by suffering, it led him to become a confessor and martyr for Christ and His Holy Church.

The writings of Metropolitan Joseph on questions of spiritual life reveal a firm foundation in Orthodox patristic and ascetical literature and draw much inspiration from the texts of the Church's service books. In 1901, when he was a hieromonk, he wrote a thorough and precise article on the question: "May an Orthodox Christian, and How May He, Pray for Non-Orthodox Christians?" Beginning in 1905, now an archimandrite, he published his major work, a whole book composed of brief spiritual reflections with the title "In the Father's Embrace: From the Diary of a Monk." The following excerpts from this work will give an idea of the author's sensitivity and precise insights into spiritual questions.

"Intense sorrows, like gold in a furnace, purify the soul, give it life, fortify and temper it. A man becomes less sensitive to his everyday sorrows and sufferings on earth, becomes calmer, more balanced, looks at the world more seriously and soberly, becomes less attached to the earthly, thirsts more for the heavenly, the eternal, the unending."

"In a man there is much energy for activity; only it needs to be awakened. It is awakened by need, sorrow, the battle for existence, love toward God, thirst for salvation, awareness of the fragility of the present life and the sweetness of the future life, and much else that is taught by the means which the Church of God possesses for the guidance and enlightenment of every man that is given to Her..."

"The more we trust in man's help and in defense by others, the farther from us are the saving and merciful grace and help of God. And this is natural: for after all, if we received help from God at a time when we expected to receive it from men, we would ascribe what is God's to men, and would turn the glory of God into human glory. Therefore the Lord arranges it even so, that His help becomes all the more evident to us, to the extent that our helplessness becomes sure and obvious and all our hope remains in Him!"

Shortly after 1908 Archimandrite Joseph was consecrated bishop of Uglich. His address on this occasion, given below in full, is consciously prophetic. Penetrated with an awareness of the rising movement of anarchy and unbelief that was already dissolving the very fabric of Orthodox Russian civilization and was about to give birth to the hideous Revolution, the young hierarch's words sound almost lke a manifesto of the very soul of Holy Russia as it faces even today the assembled armies of world-wide satanism.

YOUR HOLINESS, divinely wise Archpastors!

In this unique, exceptionally significant, and most sacred moment of my life, when the call of our Lord — "follow Me" — has touched even my extreme unworthiness — both joy and trembling, both blessedness and suffering embrace my lowly soul.

Before my mental gaze stand the choirs of holy apostles, the ranks of great hierarchs — the builders and disseminators of faith and Christ's Church on earth... From the simple to the highly-educated, from the greatly infirm to those strong and rich in powers of soul — they have offered and placed their life and all their strength on the altar of Christ's love, have given themselves as food to that sacred Fire of Christ by which the whole universe now blazes in Grace.

For me, too, to touch this grace-giving Fire; for me, too, to offer my feeble powers — or rather, infirmities — to the altar of the Universal Church;

for me, too, to place my life in the furnace of the Flame of Christ, to hear the Lord's call to serve such a great work of God and receive the possibility of answering this call with the labor of the highest Apostolic expression of love and devotion to the Sweetest Heavenly Hierarch — Oh, how many grounds there are in this for joy! How sufficient this is to fill one with a feeling of unutterable heartfelt consolation and tender feeling!...

Yet — the source of such joy and consolation at the same time represents for me a source as well of an oppressive fear, of apprehensions, of heartfelt trouble and suffering. The beauty of the Apostles' feat, the beauty of the highest expression of love and devotion to the Saviour, of the highest service to the Church of God on earth — appear to my gaze not as mere WORDS, *but as true deeds, as the most living* REALITY, *outside all embellishments of thought and word. And what labors, what ascetic feats, what sufferings has this reality not given us as an example, instruction, and fortification! Behold the bloody wounds on the bodies of the absolute prisoners of Christ's love — wounds lifted up with a meek prayer for their torturers on their lips and with the shining of an unearthly joy in their faces! Behold all the horrors of persecution, torments, tortures — every kind and every endurance of death by means of which hell has attempted to unbalance the emissaries of the Crucified One, only deepening thereby its own defeat and disgrace!*

Bearing in mind all this — which is great and glorious not by human standards, and by means of which the Church of Christ, great and mighty until now, was established — unwillingly I ask myself: Can it really be that even I am capable of bearing all this? Can it really be that even I have sufficient foundation, sufficient courage, to stand in the same rank with such exemplifications of God's power and of all that is done by the power of God's love toward man and of man's love toward God?...

Yet — my fear and trembling increase all the more at the thought that, while the strength and zeal of the leaders of the Church of Christ today are far from rivalling those of the Apostles, they must do battle with considerably stronger enemies and overcome considerably more powerful obstacles and difficulties in this service. The holy Apostles, after all, had to do with a fervent — even if falsely directed — striving toward truth, whereas we, in our time, must have to do with a hardened REJECTION OF TRUTH *and even of the very idea of the Living God and His indispensability for the human* *heart. With all their dark sides, their insufficiencies and errors, the paganism and Judaism of antiquity were nonetheless an honest seeking of God, an honest desire to serve Him, a living and active exemplification of thirst for communion with Him. But the unbelief of today, every conceivable form of error and frenzy — both learned and illiterate, both anti-religious and anti-moral — and the whole public life of today: do they not express in men a complete* UNWILLINGNESS TO KNOW GOD, *an unwillingness even to admit His existence, but on the contrary the desire* TO BE COMPLETELY RID *of Him, to do without Him, to live solely by the accomplishments of the proud human mind and culture?*

In such painful times, accepting in obedience the new service in Christ's Church laid upon me by God's will, in all humility I implore you, divinely wise pastors, to bring down upon me by your hierarchical prayers the strength from God worthily to conduct myself in this great service. May the all-powerful Grace of the Spirit of God descend upon the head obedient to God's call and do in me, who am unworthy, His will and power. Amen.

WITH THE COMING of the Revolution the forces of unbelief, whose power the hierarch well knew, were unleashed with full fury upon the Russian land and especially against the Orthodox Church, the very existence of which was a threat to the program of Bolshevism and a reproach to what conscience still remained in the frenzied atheists. As long as Patriarch Tikhon was alive, the Church had a visible center of unity. Even when the Patriarch was imprisoned, when the apostates of the "Living Church" had taken possession of the vast majority of the Orthodox churches in Russia, and the "progressive" Church of Constantinople had given international prestige to this synagogue of satan by recognizing it as the Orthodox Church of Russia — still the faithful, by remaining with their Patriarch, remained Orthodox, and their loyalty to the Patriarch became the very test of their Orthodoxy; and it was this more than anything else that broke the power of the "Living Church."

But with the death of Patriarch Tikhon in 1925, the situation became much less clear. Under the conditions of persecution it was impossible for a Church Council to be called to elect a new patriarch; and, foreseeing this, Patriarch Tikhon had designated three leading hierarchs, one of whom (whoever was not in prison or banishment) should become *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne on his death and safeguard the external unity of the Church. Of these three hierarchs, only one — Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk — was free at the time of the Patriarch's death, and he was accepted, in a special decree signed by over fifty bishops, by the Russian Church as her acting head. Metropolitan Peter himself designated three "Substitutes" for the position of *Locum Tenens* in case he should he arrested or killed in turn, one of whom was Metropolitan Joseph (at that time Archbishop of Rostov), and another, Metropolitan (later "Patriarch") Sergius. Metropolitan Peter was arrested within a few months for refusing to sign a "declaration" which would give away the Church's inner freedom to the atheist regime. From 1925 to 1927 no candidate was able to take his place for more than a few months hefore heing imprisoned, and it became clear that the Soviet Government would not rest until it had found or forced a hierarch to sign a document pleasing to the regime. This hierarch was found in the person of Metropolitan Sergius, who on July 16|29, 1927, after heing released from several months in prison, issued the infamous "Declaration" that made him and his followers in effect the agents of the Soviet State. In publishing the "Declaration" on August 19, the official Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* noted that "the far-sighted part of the clergy had already entered upon this path in 1922" — referring to the "Living Church." Thus did the atheist regime succeed in introducing "Renovationism" into the Patriarchal Church itself, and the result was the decisive protest of the leading hierarchs of the Russian Church, who, when they saw that Metropolitan Sergius was clearly determined to force his will upon the whole Church, soon hegan to break off communion with him.

It thus became immediately clear that the "Declaration" was in flagrant defiance of the 34th Apostolic Canon, having been proclaimed "without the consent of all" bishops, heing indeed the work of Sergius alone at the dictation of the atheist regime; and therefore the only ecclesiastical course open for Sergius was to retract the "Declaration" in the face of such overwhelming disapproval of his fellow hierarchs. Instead of this, however, as if to prove that he longer considered or needed the opinion of the Church, but had become the obedient tool of the regime, he hegan, together with his uncanonical "Synod" — the formation of which far exceeded his powers as Substitute of the *Locum Tenens* — an unparalleled transference of bishops from see to see and placed under interdict all who did not agree with him, founding thus a submissive "Soviet" Church.

METROPOLITAN JOSEPH

Metropolitan Joseph, as one of the first to protest the "Declaration," was quickly "transferred" from Petrograd, to which See he had arrived only in September of 1926. By an act of the "Synod" of October 19, 1927, "Metropolitan Joseph is considered transferred to the See of Odessa, and it is suggested that he not be tempted by the easy possibility of living in Rostov, which will cause disturbance among the faithful both of Leningrad and of Rostov..." In reply, Metropolitan Joseph cited those canons that forbid the needless transference of bishops from city to city and stated, quoting the canons: "Even if I allowed to be done with me such a thing contrary to a Council of the Holy Fathers, then still may this order 'be completely invalid' and may he who has been removed 'be returned' to his own Church." Giving his case over "to the Judgement of God," he refused to move.

At this time, in the autumn of 1927, Metropolitan Joseph still regarded his case as a private one, and, as he states in one of the "Documents" that follow, he was prepared to retire in disgrace and under interdict in order not to have any communion with Sergius, but he still had no intention of becoming involved in any kind of "schism."

Soon, however, it became clear that his case was only a small part of an issue that had convulsed the whole of Orthodox Russia. The leading bishops who were still in freedom and were able to judge the issue came to the conclusion that Sergius himself had gone into schism by his "Declaration" and his arbitrary acts directed against the Church, and they hastened to declare their separation from him, in late 1927 and early 1928. Metropolitan Joseph all this time was not allowed by the authorities to reside at his see of Petrograd (Leningrad), but already in December of 1927 he blessed his Vicar Bishops to depart from Sergius; and, being himself in Rostov, he signed, together with Metropolitan Agathangel and other hierarchs of the Yaroslavl region, an epistle to Metropolitan Sergius of February 6, 1928, which declared their separation from him until he should show repentance for his errors, recognizing in the meantime no head of the Church apart from the banished Metropolitan Peter.

Petrograd at this time had become the very heart of the Church's protest against Sergius, and there was scarcely an Orthodox soul in the former capital that was not anguished over the question of whom to follow. Many refused for a time to receive Communion in any church, uncertain as to whose sacraments were valid or where the Church of Christ was to be found. After signing the epistle of the Yaroslavl Archpastors, Metropolitan Joseph stepped boldly forward into battle for the Church and gave his blessing for the clergy and faithful of Petrograd to follow his example in separating from Sergius, offering his own spiritual guidance and care to this movement, and entrusting the governance of the Petrograd Diocese to his outspokenly anti-Sergianist Vicar, Bishop Dimitry of Gdov. Blessing the "good decision of the zealots of Christ's truth," he prayed "that the Lord preserve us all in unanimity and holy firmness of spirit in the new trial which the Church is undergoing."

But against the spiritual weapons of Christ's warriors, the evil one gathered all the forces of the world's first satanist regime. The interdictions of Metropolitan Sergius were the sign for the Soviet Political Police to arrest and banish the protesting bishops; even many who attended Sergius' own "legal" churches were not spared by the authorities, and the chief result of the policy of "Sergianism" — to quote the words, born of bitter experience, used forty years later inside the USSR by Boris Talantov — was that "Metropolitan Sergius' actions saved nothing except his own skin." A dark night of expiatory suffering settled upon the Russian land and faithful. "Sergianism" itself was rejected by the faithful, inasmuch as — in the words, again, of Talantov — "by the beginning of the Second World War... the greater part of those churches that remained did not recognize Metropolitan Sergius." Out of the more than 100 bishops known to be still alive in 1943, Sergius could find only 18 (and some of these were newly consecrated) to elect him "Patriarch" in that year.

Metropolitan Joseph, by his decisive words and acts and by his position as one of the Substitutes of the *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne, became the factual head of the separatist movement, acting in the name of the banished *Locum Tenens,* Metropolitan Peter, whose anti-Sergianist attitude was not to become known for some time. So powerful was the influence and example of Metropolitan Joseph that all who followed him came to be called "Josephites," and to this day all who defend the Sergianist Moscow Patriarchate refer to this movement of the zealots of Orthodoxy as the "Josephite schism."

There were "Sergianists" at that time, as there are today, who, even while admitting that it was the best element among the clergy and faithful who went over to the side of the "Josephites," nonetheless accuse and condemn them for their "pride" in believing that they represented the true Orthodox Church of Russia. The statements of Metropolitan Joseph, it is true, are extremely outspoken, absolutely uncompromising in principle, and unsparing of persons. But those who find "pride" in such words are perhaps simply unaware of the critical urgency of the issues involved. When the Church is being betrayed and the faithful led astray, it is no time for compliments and polite "dialogues," nor for placing "sympathy" above truth. For courageous souls the knowledge that every word may bring prison and death only increases their boldness in speaking the truth without embellishments. And thus it has always been in the Church of Christ; Her outspoken defenders are hymned as champions in the Church's song of praise. Significantly, the righteous polemic of Metropolitan Joseph and his followers has emerged again in the contemporary Soviet Union in the writings of Boris Talantov (see page 153 of this book) and other outspoken critics of the Sergianist hierarchy. By comparison, the criticisms of Sergianism in the Russian diaspora are quite mild and charitable.

METROPOLITAN JOSEPH himself was very soon arrested and sent in banishment to Central Asia. Even in banishment and prison the authorities persecuted religion and prohibited services, and so it was that throughout the Russian land, this one vast concentration camp, in the period after 1927 the "Josephites" became transformed into the Catacomb Church. The full measure of the heroic deeds and sufferings of this Church will become known only in God's time. But even before that ardently-desired time, it is possible to glimpse some small fragments of its history. The following first-hand account was written by Natalia V. Urusova, who was able to escape from the Soviet Union during the Second World War, and died in 1968 in New York.

"In August of 1936 there was living in Alma Ata (Central Asia) the comparatively young Archimandrite Arsenius. From him I found out for the first time that there exists a secret, catacomb Church, headed by Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and organized by him with the blessing of Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk, with whom he, while being in banishment in Chemkent, 100 miles from Alma Ata, had secret contact all the time. Archimandrite Arsenius was ordained by the Metropolitan and had the good fortune to support him materially, earning his living by the manufacture of various kinds of mannikins and small articles for museums. He had a church deep down underground and he and Metropolitan Joseph served in it. The Metropolitan had also consecrated it, secretly, on one of his rare trips to Alma Ata. Fr. Arsenius had dug out this church by great and long labors.

"We had great respect for Archimandrite Arsenius, all the more because he was loved by Metropolitan Joseph and through him we could have contact with the latter. The Metropolitan at that time was living in Chemkent. Before that, from the very beginning of his banishment, he had lived in the small town of Aulieta, where he had not been allowed to live in a room, but had been placed in a shed with farm animals, his bed separated from them by a fence of stakes.

"The church dug out of the earth was in the apartment of Archimandrite Arsenius. The entrance was a trap-door, covered by a carpet. The top was taken off, and under it was a ladder to the cellar. In one corner of the cellar there was an opening in the earth, which was covered with rocks. The rocks were moved aside and, bending down completely, one had to crawl three steps forward, and there was the entrance to the tiny church. There were many icons, and lamps were burning. Metropolitan Joseph was very tall, and nonetheless twice in my presence he travelled here secretly and penetrated to this church.

"A remarkable state of mind and soul was created by this church, but I do not hide the fact that the fear of being discovered during the services, especially at night, was difficult to conquer. When the big chained dog began to bark in the yard — even though it was muffled, still it was audible underground — then everyone expected the cry and the knock of the GPU. For the whole of 1936 and until September in 1937 everything was all right. My son sang here together with one nun. On August 26 Metropolitan Joseph came and honored us with a visit on my namesday.

"What a marvellous, humble, unshakable man of prayer! This was reflected in his face and eyes as in a mirror. Very tall, with a large white beard and an extraordinarily kind face, he could not help but attract one to him, and one only wished never to part from him. His monastic garb was covered up, as was his hair; otherwise he would have been arrested immediately right on the street, since he was watched and did not have the right to travel. He himself said that Patriarch Tikhon had offered, right after his election, to designate him as his first Substitute. For some reason this has not been noted anywhere yet in the history of the institution of *Locum Tenens.* He recognized Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk as the lawful head of the Church, and right up to the latter's arrest in September, 1937, he had secret contacts with him, even while rumors were circulating everywhere that Metropolitan Peter was dead.

"Metropolitan Joseph stayed at tea with us for over an hour. Concerning his banishment of almost ten years, he related that it had been extremely difficult. He had lived in a sty with pigs in a platted shed, slept on boards separated from the pigs by a few stakes. In these conditions he had borne cold and heat, every kind of weather and the stifling air. Once a snake, clinging to a stake on his roof, crawled down right over his head. These conditions were also apparently the cause of his illness. At times he suffered terribly from an intestinal ulcer, or perhaps he had some kind of internal tumor, perhaps cancerous, and he was on a diet which Archimandrite Arsenius helped him to keep. He suffered everything like the righteous, and if he related his difficult persecutions, it was only because we all were recalling the cruelties of the GPU.

"Fr. Arsenius told here of one form of torture and mockery. 'When they were taking us through Siberia, there was a severe frost. In the train there was a bath-car. They chased us, completely naked, through the cars to the bath. With joy we drenched ourselves with the hot water and got a little warm, since the cars themselves were almost unheated. Without giving us anything to dry ourselves with, with wet heads, they chased us back. On the metal platform between cars they deliberately stopped us, and our wet feet immediately froze to the metal. At the command to advance, we tore away with blood the frozen bottoms of our feet...'

"On the next day, after staying overnight with Fr. Arsenius, the Metropolitan returned to his own place. Now he was living in different circumstances. After many years it was permitted to find an apartment for him in Chemkent. Archimandrite Arsenius arranged an apartment for him to live quietly in, saw to his food, not only as to its sufficiency but also to keep his diet. First a zither, and then a harmonium was obtained for him, which were a joy for the Metropolitan, who was a good musician. He put psalms to music and sang them.

"On September 23, 1937, everywhere in the neighborhood of Alma Ata, throughout Kazakhstan, all the clergy of the underground Josephite churches were arrested, after having served their terms of banishment for refusing to recognize the Soviet churches. All of them were sentenced to ten years more without right of correspondence and, as I discovered later, Metropolitan Joseph also was among them. Archimandrite Arsenius was also arrested. After the arrest of my son, being beside myself, I was running to Fr. Arsenius right at dawn, and coming up to his house I saw an automobile and the GPU going in to him. Fortunately they did not see me. The underground church of Fr. Arsenius was discovered. Through lack of caution he once revealed its secret to an elderly man, respectable in appearance, who turned out to be an agent of the GPU.

"On returning to Moscow after my three-year voluntary banishment together with my son, I very soon found out about the existence here also of secret Josephite churches — that is to say, not churches, but services in secret rooms, where sometimes twenty to twenty-five people would gather. The service would be conducted in a whisper, with strict control by the faithful in view of the possibility of betrayal. People came usually at dawn according to an agreed signal. For the most part they would carefully tap at the drainpipe by a window, where someone would be standing and listening.

"Until the arrival of the Germans in Mozhaisk in 1941, I lived peacefully in this city and went to catacomb services in Moscow."

AT THE END OF 1938 Metropolitan Joseph was executed by firing squad for the "crime" of giving encouragement to wandering priests. Years before he had spiritually prepared himself, as it were, for this, his own martyrdom. He wrote in his "Diary of a Monk," in an entry published in September, 1905:

"*Love your enemies* (St. Luke 6: 35). To say this is easy, but — how difficult to do it. This is much higher than simply love of neighbor. It is the supreme triumph of love, its true essence and most superb expression... In order that one's heart might be inflamed with love toward one's enemy, there must be a special, grace-given state of soul, a special heavenly attunement of the heart — there must be that inexpressible and indescribable quality that abundantly filled the soul of the First Martyr Stephen when he, being stoned, his face shining like an angel, prayed for his murderers: *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge* (Acts 7: 60). Oh, in this great moment for him what a small place did everything earthly around him find in him! What were the executioners to him? Before him were the opened heavens, the Son of God at the right hand of the Father; heavenly glory poured into his soul and seized it entirely with an incomprehensible ecstasy, and the executioners with all their pitiful malice not only could not prevent this, but even assisted it; at this moment they were even, as it were, his benefactors, hastening his departure from the body and the utter immersion of his soul in these oceans of heavenly ecstasy and blessedness... In this blissful moment, could the tortured sufferer cry out in any other way than with the voice of the supreme triumph of love for one's enemies?!"

The example of this fearless confessor and champion of Christ's Church has not been in vain. After Patriarch Tikhon himself, the name of Metropolitan Joseph stands out as a symbol of the integrity and genuineness of the Orthodoxy of the Russian Church. Even after half a century of persecution, terror, and betrayal, the true Orthodox Church of Russia, though hidden, has not been vanquished. To the present day one can accurately call this Catacomb Church either the Church of "Tikhonites" or the Church of "Josephites"; but most accurately of all, it is known, even to the Soviet authorities themselves, as the "True Orthodox Church." In the following Soviet account, taken from the *Atheist's Dictionary* (Moscow, 2nd Edition, 1966) —a practical handbook for anti-religious agitators — one may see, behind the exaggerations and fabrications of the Soviet mind, the true and confessing Orthodox Church of Russia today. One may note in this account that the Soviets themselves are well aware of the historical continuities involved; for they date the origin of the "True Orthodox Church" to the years 1922-26, i.e., to Patriarch Tikhon and his followers; whereas the "Sergianists," as *Izvestia* saw clearly in 1927, have their origins in the "Living Church" of that same period.

TRUE ORTHODOX CHURCH *(TOC): An Orthodox-monarchist sect, originating in the years* 1922-26, *which was organized in* 1927, *when Metr. Sergius proclaimed the principles of a loyal relation to Soviet authority. Monarchist elements, united around the Metropolitan of Leningrad Joseph (Petrovykh), or* JOSEPHITES, *in 1928 established a directing center of the TOC, and united all groups and elements which had come out against the Soviet order. In the country the TOC had support among the kulaks and together with other anti-Soviet elements came out against collectivization and organized terroristic acts against Party and Soviet activities, uprisings, etc. It directed* *into the villages a multitude of monks and nuns, who roamed about the countryside spreading anti Soviet rumors. The TOC was a widely ramified monarchist-rebellious organization. In its composition were 613 priests and monks, 416 kulaks, 70 former tsarist officials and officers. The more fanatical members, crazy women, passing themselves off for prophets, saints, healers, members of the imperial family, spread monarchist ideas, conducted propaganda against the leadership of the Orthodox Church, called on people not to submit to Soviet laws.*

Basic characteristics of the sect: (1) rejection of the Orthodox Church headed by the patriarch as having 'sold itself to Antichrist,' to the world; (2) recognition as canonical of only those clergy who have been ordained by followers of Tikhon; (3) acceptance of Orthodox rites; (4) *propaganda of the approaching 'end of the world'; (5) cult of members of the imperial family of Romanov: their portraits are preserved as holy objects, and believers in secret make prostrations in front of them; (6) assumption of the names of tsars and their relatives by the leaders of the sect; (7) preservation and spread of counter-revolutionary monarchist literature; (8) establishment of catacomb churches and monasteries in houses. The institution of priesthood is preserved, but in many places certain rites are performed by ordinary believers. On great religious holidays the members of this sect gather at so-called sources (lakes, springs, and the like), where propaganda is conducted by various kinds of clairvoyants, foretellers, crazy men, holy fools, who enjoy special honor in the sect. Striving to fence off the members of the sect from the influence of Soviet reality, the leaders of the sect in order to frighten believers make use of the myth of Antichrist, who has supposedly been reigning in the world since* 1917. *So as not to fall into his nets, Christians are to lead a closed-up, hermitic form of life, spend all their free time in prayer, not take part in public life.*

The Soviet press in recent years has given ample evidence of the existence of this True Orthodox Church. Its existence is illegal, and its members are treated as criminals by the regime. Of necessity its governing principle must be Metropolitan Joseph's instruction to his followers in 1927: "Govern yourselves independently"; and its members are chiefly, as he foresaw (see p. 128), "not only not bishops and not archpriests, but the simplest mortals."

The existence of this Catacomb Church today is surely a sign to world Orthodoxy: the age of Orthodoxy's grandeur is past; the last age of catacombs is in our midst. In Russia this truth is more than evident; among its many proofs, perhaps the most striking is the history of the Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow (see p. 192). Once a magnificent temple, a monument to God's preservation of the Russian land in 1812 and a visible symbol of the faith of a whole people, it was entirely destroyed by the Soviets, and to this day nothing has been built on its site, and it remains a gaping hole in the center of the capital of world atheism. A surprising testimony of its meaning for the Russian people even today may be found in a short novel, *Iskupleniye* ("Redemption"), by the Soviet writer Yuly Daniel; while not a believer himself, his observations touch something very deep within Soviet life. "I met Mishka Lurye at the Metro station 'Hall of the Soviets' near the board fence surrounding the excavation. Interesting: will they build something here, or will this hole remain this way as a monument to the blown-up Church of Christ the Saviour? How many years the boards have been here, posters stuck up on them. 'Mishka, when did they blow up the church?' 'What church?... Oh, they blew it up in '34....' 29 years ago they blew up the church. Despite the proverb, the holy place is empty. Of course, I don't argue, there's no benefit in churches, not a bit; they're architectural monuments, no more: but all the same... They blew up God, and the shock-wave from the explosion wounded man, gave him a contusion. Deafness, dumbness... The pus flows from under the bandage, from under the articles on humanism..." (Author now in prison.)

Even so, he who looks for the Church in the Soviet Union today finds — a hole in the earth, a deep wound in the Orthodox Russian people that is not at all hidden by the false front of the Moscow Patriarchate. But is the situation so very different in the free world? Here voluntary apostasy, renovationism and heresy have achieved much the same result as the coercion of the atheist regime in the USSR. Behind the glittering facade of almost all the free Orthodox Churches, with their "ecumenical" triumphs — is a gaping hole in the earth, all the abyss of difference that exists between the "official" apostates and the "simple mortals": the saving remnant of Orthodox faithful of many nations. Even now these faithful are being driven into the voluntary catacombs of separation from the ecumenist heresiarchs, gathering around the few truly Orthodox bishops who remain. Thus the Divine Head of the Church prepares them for the greater trials that seem to lie ahead. The prophecy of the holy and clairvoyant Elder Ignaty of Harbin, made some 30 years ago, no longer seems remote: "*What began in Russia, will end in America.*"

But if such terrible days be truly upon us, even Orthodox America — so weak, so inexperienced, so naive — has all that is necessary to face these days in the example of Metropolitan Joseph and the True Orthodox Christians of the first land to experience the fearful yoke of satanic atheism.

Holy New Hieromartyr Joseph and all the new martyrs of the Communist Yoke, pray to God for us!

THE EPISTLES OF METROPOLITAN JOSEPH

The following are the principal epistles that have come down to us from the first head of the Catacomb Church, demonstrating his fearless stand against Sergianism at its very outbreak.

RESOLUTION ON THE REPORT OF THE PETROGRAD VICARS

Document of December 23, 1927

IN ORDER TO CONDEMN and counteract the latest actions of Metropolitan Sergius, which are contrary to the spirit and the good of the Holy Church of Christ, under present conditions we have no other means apart from a decisive departure from him and an ignoring of his orders. Let these orders be accepted henceforth only by the paper they are written on, which tolerates anything, and by the unfeeling air which contains everything — but not by the living souls of the faithful children of Christ's Church.

In separating from Metropolitan Sergius and his acts, we do not separate from our lawful Chief Hierarch, Metropolitan Peter, nor from the Council, which will meet at some time in the future, of those Orthodox hierarchs who have remained faithful. May this Council, our sole competent judge, not then hold us guilty for our boldness. May it judge us, not as despisers of the sacred canons of the Fathers, but only as fearful to violate them. Even if we have erred, we have erred honestly, out of zeal for the purity of Orthodoxy in the present evil age. And if we turn out to be guilty, then may we be even especially deserving of condescension, and not of deposition.

And so, even if all pastors should leave us, may the Heavenly Pastor not leave us, according to His unfailing promise to remain in His Church to the end of the age.

APPEAL TO THE FAITHFUL OF PETROGRAD

Document of early 1928, written from Rostov

THE ARCHPASTORS of the ecclesiastical province of Yaroslavl — Agathangel Metropolitan of Yaroslavl, Seraphim Archbishop of Uglich, former Substitute of the Patriarchal *Locum Tenens,* Archbishop Varlaam, formerly of Pskov, now ruling the Dashedovsky Vicariate of the Diocese of Yaroslavl, and Eugene Bishop of Rostov — by a special document have declared their separation from Metropolitan Sergius and their independent governance from now on of the flocks entrusted to them by God. This document, signed on January 27 (February 9), has to such an extent been called forth by the conditions of the times and the attitude of the faithful masses of people, and this separation is so well founded, that I, residing in the Yaroslavl region, have taken part in it and added my own signature to it.

Thus, henceforth all the orders of Metropolitan Sergius have no force for us. This gives me grounds to protest anew my unlawful removal from the flock of Leningrad and to ask for a canonically correct decision on this question at an appropriate trial by Orthodox bishops. And until such a decision I consider myself to have no right to leave the flock entrusted to me (in the sense of the 16th Canon of the First and Second Council) to the arbitrary whim of Church administrators who do not have our confidence; and before the Lord God and my conscience I accept the obligation to take measures to pacify my disturbed and agitated flock. To this end I call first of all upon my vicar bishops to serve the flock of Leningrad in concord with me. To the Right Reverend Bishop of Gdov, Dimitry, I give over the temporary governance of the Diocese of Leningrad. The Right Reverend Gregory I likewise request to continue serving in the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra as my substitute, in concord with me.

Invoking God's blessing upon the shepherds and all the faithful, I request and beg you to trust our leadership and our archpastoral concern, peacefully and quietly continuing the work of prayer, salvation of the soul, and Divine service, humbly submitting to the civil authority, which for the time being has not found it possible to permit my unworthiness to come into immediate communion in prayer with the flock entrusted to me. Being far away, I shall nonetheless be in constant prayerful remembrance of and concern for you, requesting that my name be pronounced at Divine services in the customary way. May the Lord hear our common lamentation, and may He bless with peace and quiet our much-suffering Church.

EPISTLE TO AN ARCHIMANDRITE OF PETROGRAD (1928)

DEAR FATHER: Until lately I thought that my dispute wiith Metropolitan Sergius was finished and that, refusing to offer myself as a sacrifice to the crude politics, intrigues, and pursuits of the enemies and betrayers of the Church, I could peacefully go off to the side, voluntarily offering myself as a sacrifice of protest and warfare against this foul politics and arbitrariness. And I was entirely sincere when I thought and said that "I am not starting any kind of schism," and I will submit to the unlawful punishment against me — all the way to interdict and excommunication hoping in God's justice alone.

But it turned out that ecclesiastical life does not stand at freezing point, but bubbles and foams above the normal boiling point. My "small case" soon turned out to be only a small part of such a monstrous arbitrariness, flattery of men, and betrayal of the Church to the interests of atheism and the destruction of this Church, that it remained for me henceforth to wonder not only at my own calmness and patience, but now as well at the indifference and blindness of those others who still suppose that those who have allowed and done this hideous thing are doing the work of God, are "saving" the Church, are governing and not crudely injuring Her, mocking Her, numbering themselves among Her enemies, cutting themselves off from Her — for it is not they who are cutting off those who cannot bear any longer this bacchanalia, this crude coercion and hideously blasphemous politics.

Perhaps I could have borne even this. I could have assumed that it was none of my business, just as my affair now is none of yours. But, dear

Father, I suddenly with particular pain began to feel myself to a significant degree responsible for the Church's misfortune. After all, as you know, I am one of the Substitutes of the Patriarchal *Locum Tenens*, who is obliged by an obligation of suffering not only to take the place of my arrested predecessor, but also to be for him, even when he is free, a precaution, ready to take his place in case he should spiritually fall. To be sure, such a spiritual fall should be, in the normal conditions of ecclesiastical life, accompanied by a trial and a conciliar decision. But what kind of trial and conciliar decision are possible now, under present conditions? And by what kind of trial and conciliar decision was there administered to me a punishment which is permissible according to the canons only for a great sin on my part? Why is it that, demanding a trial and conciliar decision in one instance you allow their absence in another?

Such an argument can be no more than material for a section on incongruities in a textbook on logic. Just wait; the time will come, we hope, when we shall speak of our events also at a trial. And there is still a great question as to who will then be the more accused. But for the time being the matter stands thus: We will not give the Church as a sacrifice over to the mercy of the betrayers and foul politicians and agents of atheism and destruction. And by this protest we do not cut ourselves off from Her, but we cut them off from us and boldly say: not only have we not gone away, do not go away, and will never go away from the bosom of the true Orthodox Church, but those who are not with us and for us, but against us, we consider Her enemies, betrayers, and murderers. It is not we who go into schism by not submitting to Metropolitan Sergius, but rather you who are obedient to him go with him into the abyss of the Church's condemnation. We call upon you and fortify your powers for battle for the independence of the Church, only not at all in the way you suppose is required: not by agreement with the enslavers of this Church and the murderers of Her holy independence, which is manifested now in Her holy rightlessness, but rather by a loud and decisive protest against every acquiescence, against hypocritical and lying compromises and against the betrayal of Her interests to the interests of godless satanism and a bitter warfare against Christ and His Church.

Do you really not see the contradiction and incongruity, which are not compatible with anything, in your dilemma? (You say:) "Will you take away our obedience to you by going into schism, or, by submitting to Metropolitan Sergius, fortify our powers for the battle for the independence of the

Holy Church?" *I* am going into schism?! Submission to Sergius is *a battle for the independence of the Church?!* My dear! Any old lady in Leningrad will laugh that out of town!

Perhaps, I do not dispute, "there are more of you, presently, than of us." And let it be that "the great mass is not for me," as you say. But I will never consider myself a schismatic, even if I were to remain absolutely alone, as one of the holy confessors once was. The matter is not at all one of quantity, do not forget that for a minute: the Son of God, *when He cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?* (St. Luke 18: 8.) And perhaps the last "rebels" against the betrayers of the Church and the accomplices of Her ruin will be, not only not bishops and not archpriests, but the simplest mortals, just as at the Cross of Christ His last gasp of suffering was heard by a few simple souls who were close to Him.

And so, dear Father, do not judge me severely, especially by means of your Balsamon. I reckon that he is quite far from being the same thing that the very authors of the holy canons wrote in a sense understandable to everyone even without commentaries, and that in any case this Balsamon cannot be an authoritative and faithful commentary of our circumstances, which were not foreseen by any commentaries and canons at all.

Do not judge me so severely, and clearly understand the following:

1. I am not at all a schismatic, and I call not to a schism, but to the purification of the Church from those who sow real schism and provoke it.
2. To indicate to another his errors and wrongs is not schism but, to speak simply, it is putting an unbridled horse back into harness.
3. The refusal to accept sound reproaches and directives is in reality a schism and a trampling on the truth.
4. In the construction of ecclesiastical life the participants are not only those at the head, but the whole body of the Church, and a schismatic is he who assumes to himself rights which exceed his authority and in the name of the Church presumes to say that which is not shared by his colleagues.
5. Metropolitan Sergius has shown himself to be such a schismatic, for he has far exceeded his authority and has rejected and scorned the voice of many hierarchs, in whose midst the pure truth has been preserved.

You remark incidentally that among the number of ways to truth, "Christ indicated to us yet another new path: that ye love one another";

About this I only remind you, Father, of the marvellous conclusion of Metropolitan Philaret in his sermon on love for one's enemies: "And so, despise the enemies of God, strike the enemies of the fatherland, love your enemies! Amen." (Vol. I, p. 285. See also the Apostle of love, II John 1: 10, 11.)

The defenders of Sergius say that the canons allow one to separate oneself from a bishop only for heresy which has been condemned by a council. Against this one may reply that the deeds of Metropolitan Sergius may be sufficiently placed in this category as well, if one has in view such an open violation by him of the freedom and dignity of the Church, One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

But beyond this, the canons themselves could not foresee many things. And can one dispute that it is even worse and more harmful than any heresy when one plunges a knife into the Church's very heart — Her freedom and dignity? Which is more harmful—a heretic or a murderer (of the Church)?

...Lest imperceptibly and little by little we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ. the Liberator of all men, has given us as a free gift by His Own blood (8th Canon of the Third Ecumenical Council).

SOURCES. *"Documents" and Urusova (p. 17), from Protopresbyter M. Polsky,* RUSSIA'S NEW MARTYRS, *vol. 2, Jordanville, N.Y., 1957. pp. 1-10: writings of Metr. Joseph:* DUSHEPOLYEZNOYE CHTENIYE, 1901, 1905, 1906; *address on consecration (p. 11): Appendix to* TSERKOVNIE VEDOMOSTI. *c.* 1909, *no.* 13-14, *pp.* 601*ff*; *Yuly Daniel (Nikolai Arzhak),* ISKUPLENIYE, *Inter-Language Literary Associates, N.Y..* 1964, *p.* 17.

8

Bishop Hierotheus

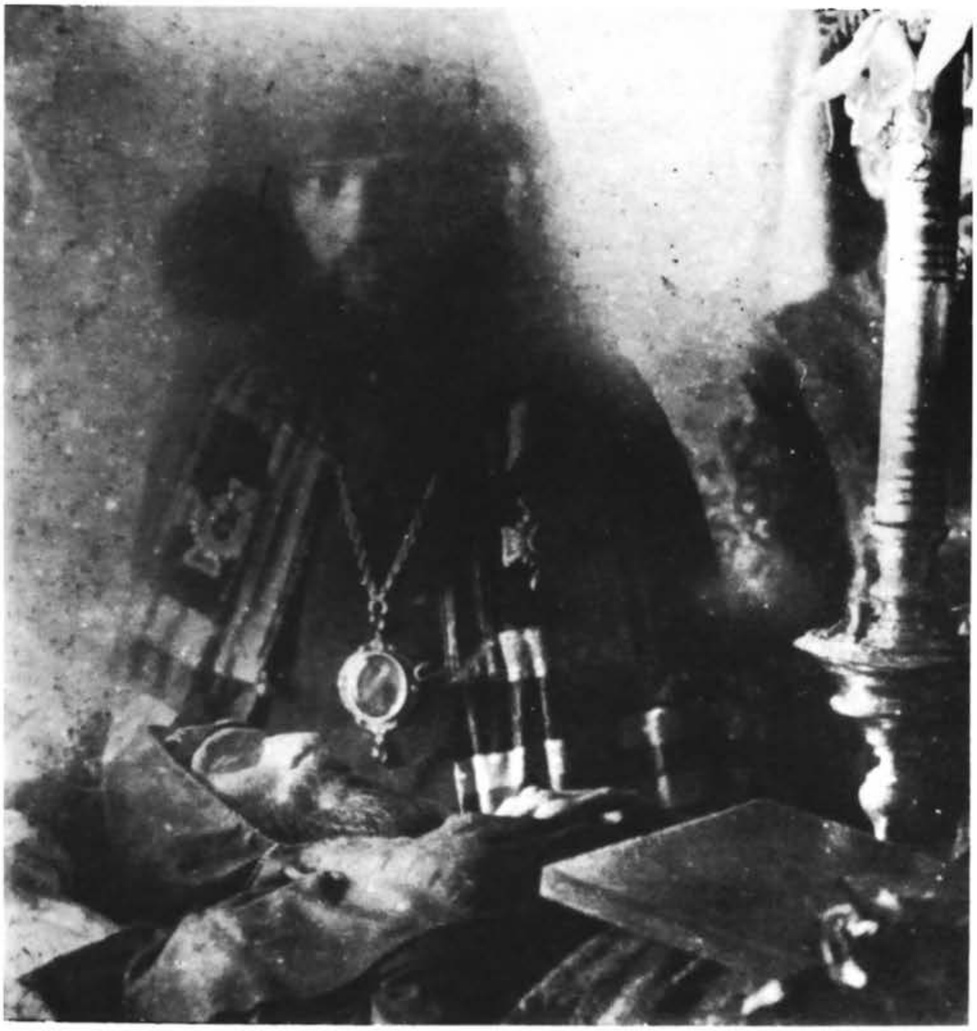
AND HIS FRIEND, SCHEMA-HIEROMONK SERAPHIM

Commemorated May 31 (†1927)

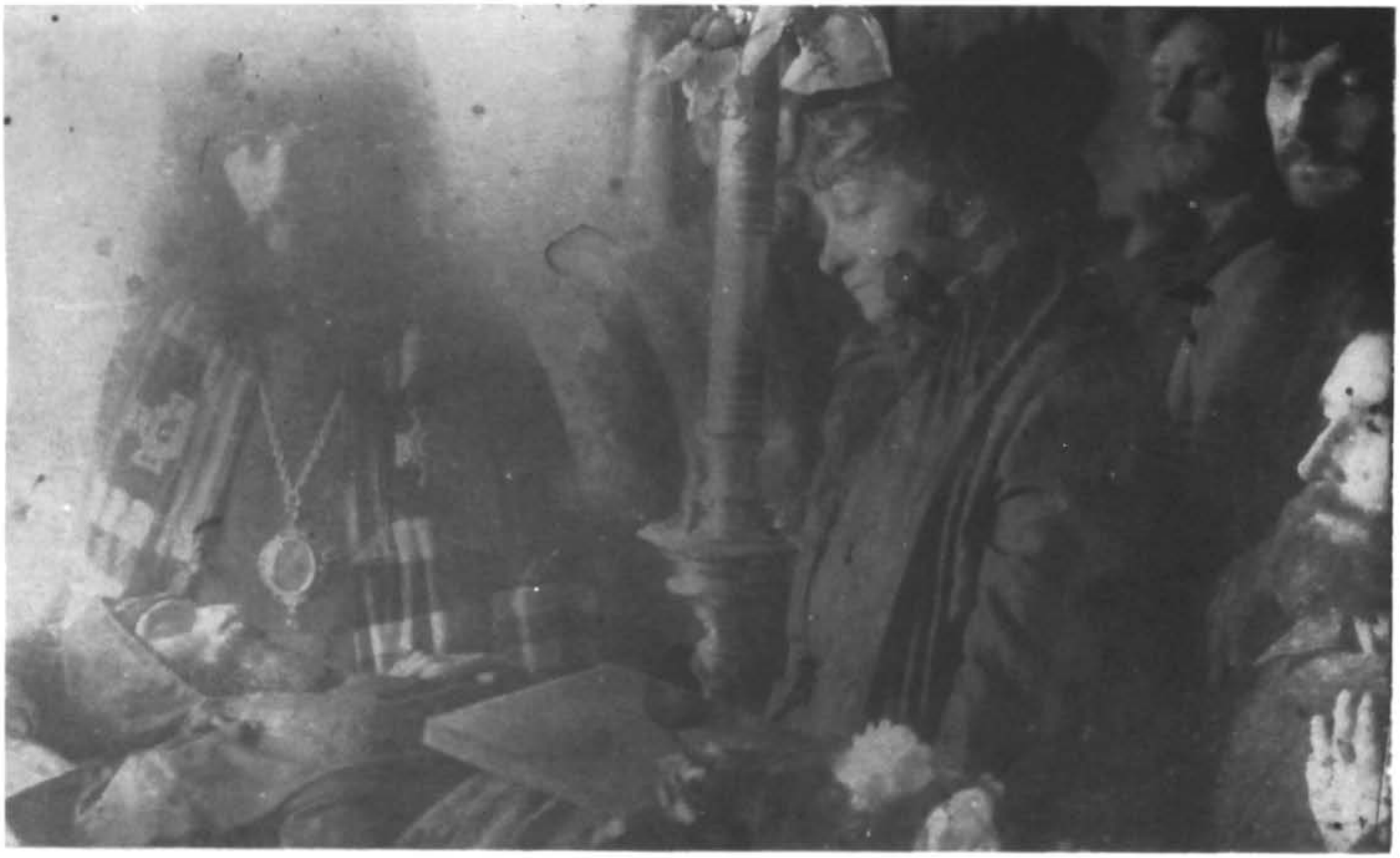
> *The good shepherd giveth*
> *his life for the sheep.*
> John 10:11

THE FIRST MARTYR of the Catacomb Church, who died directly for the purity of Christ's Church at the very outbreak of impious Sergianism, was a young and zealous hierarch, well known to Patriarch Tikhon, Bishop Hierotheus (Athonik) of Nikolsk in the Diocese of Ustiug the Great, a Vicariate of Vologda. And the land of his martyrdom, the northern plains of Russia, once abundant with glorious monk-saints of the "Northern Thebaid," became once more plenteous with saints — but now with martyrs and confessors of the Church of Christ.

Bishop Hierotheus was much loved and very popular among his flock. His outspokenness and his refusal to submit to Metropolitan Sergius and his new church policy or to pray for the God-hating Soviet State during church services led him to his martyr's crown. In May of 1928, when the Soviet authorities came to arrest him, the people gathered in great numbers and would not allow him to be arrested. Without further ceremony the authorities shot him in the head and killed him. Thus, falling dead into the arms of his loving flock, the hieromartyr literally fulfilled the words of Christ which he had just quoted in his own epistle to his flock (see page 134): *The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* And, like a chosen sacrifice, he went straight to the Throne of God as the first heavenly intercessor of the Catacomb Church, whose members from this time forth were to undergo the cruelest sufferings and tortures, yet thereby multiplying and becoming the sole bearers of the purity of the true Orthodox Church in Russia.



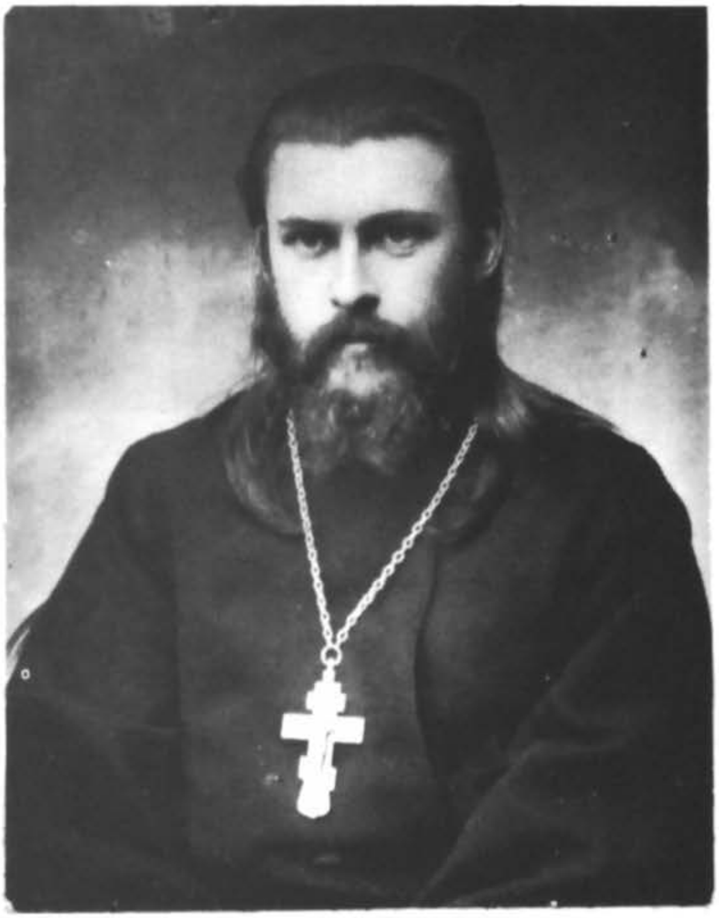
Bishop Hierotheus of Nikolsk beside the
body of his friend Hieroschema-monk Seraphim



THE FUNERAL OF A MARTYR

A RARE GLIMPSE OF LIFE UNDER THE COMMUNIST YOKE

Bishop Hierotheus performs the funeral service for his friend. As the young Father Seraphim lies in his coffin, unrecognizable from the sufferings undergone during his imprisonment, his mother and local peasant friends bid farewell to his earthly remains. At right: Father Seraphim before his martyrdom.



BISHOP HIEROTHEUS

Bishop Hierotheus had a young friend, Father Seraphim. The following account of his life is in the words of a relative of his, H. Kontzevitch.

"Father Seraphim was born in 1897 and was named Sergius. He spent his childhood in Petersburg, where his father, Constantine Voensky, was the chief warden of the Archives of the Ministry of Public Education and a historian. Strange to say, there was something similar between the Voensky family and the "Karamazovs" of Dostoyevsky's novel. The father of the family, having led from childhood a loose life, was light-minded, and his wife, Olga, exasperated by his behavior, was constantly at war with him, which created unpleasant scenes, so that the home atmosphere was very trying.

"This reflected adversely on the frail and sensitive boy. He early realized that his father lived at the mercy of his passions. Sergius did not wish to be like this. Therefore, he began to develop his power of will. He read books on the subject, slept on the bare floor, and even was about to try Yoga. Then one day he went to Valaam. The grandeur of the great monastery left a deep impression on him; there his soul found its home. He began to go frequently to Valaam on pilgrimage; he even talked his father into going there, where the latter by a miracle gave up smoking, which he had never been able to do. In 1917 Sergius finished Military Academy. The whirlwind of revolution scattered the members of the family: his father ended up in Malta, and Sergius and his mother found themselves in the city of Nikolsk, where they settled in the house of a priest and lived in great poverty.

"Here occurred Sergius' most significant meeting with the young Bp. Hierotheus. The bishop ordained him priest, and he served in a parish. Meanwhile the Revolution was raging and the clergy was being exterminated. Bp. Hierotheus presented Fr. Sergius to Patriarch Tikhon already as a candidate for bishop. The Patriarch called him to Moscow. He went, met the Patriarch, and on his return to Nikolsk he was arrested. In prison he underwent the usual tortures inflicted upon members of the clergy by the atheist regime. He developed tuberculosis. He was finally released from prison to 'die at home,' which in fact happened very soon, in the year 1923, when he was just 26 years old. On his deathbed his friend, Bp. Hierotheus, tonsured him in the Great Schema with the name Seraphim, and buried him with the rites of the Church.

"In 1915 I met Father Seraphim for the first time. He was then the student Sergius, a close friend of my brother, who was attending school in

Petersburg. He was a short, thin young man, with dark hair, and with an extraordinarily kind and attractive face. He had beautiful, dark blue eyes. There was in him something not of this world.

"When the news came of Fr. Seraphim's death, I wrote to his father: 'Dear Uncle Kostya, How fortunate you are. You are the father of a saint! On the day of your death he will come for you and take you to that land where he is now, where there will be no more tears or sorrow, but eternal joy.' "

O Lord, grant rest to the righteous souls of thy slaves, Bishop Hierotheus and Schema-Hieromonk Seraphim, and by their prayers grant us, too, the strength to confess true Orthodoxy to our last breath. Amen.

THE SEPARATION OF HIEROTHEUS, BISHOP OF NIKOLSK

Document of January 12, 1928

TO ALL MY CO-WORKERS in the Lord's Name on the spiritual field, to the clergy and laymen of the Diocese of Ustiug: In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And grant us with one mouth and one heart to glorify Thy most honorable and majestic Name.

Dear pastors and faithful children of the Orthodox Church: You know that without unity there is no salvation. The organism of the Church is one: Christ is the Head of the Church; the mouth, eyes, hands, and feet are pastors and teachers, the organs of the Church; and the body of the Church is all who believe in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The whole body moves with one spirit and is animated by one heart. A part of the body which is not nourished by the heart's blood falls away and perishes. Thus before our own eyes did the Renovationists fall away from the Church; they did not wish to be in communion with the primary person in the Church, the Most Holy Patriarch, and now they are gradually rotting away, like some useless hand or foot that has been cut off and thrown on the ground.

BISHOP HIEROTHEUS

After the Renovationists of the "Living Church" it was the "Autocephalists" — the followers of Archbishop Gregory of Ekaterinburg (Gregorians), who did not acknowledge the *Locum Tenens* Metropolitan Peter — who renounced the unity of the Church. And now the unity of the Church has been broken by Metropolitan Sergius, the Substitute of Metropolitan Peter. As long as he was a faithful guardian of the Patriarchal See which was entrusted to him, the entire Church considered him its guide; but when he has undertaken arbitrary enterprises approved neither by the people of the Church nor by a Council of Bishops, and without the blessing of Metropolitan Peter — then no one is obliged to follow the path of his errors.

At the time of the Renovationism of the Living Church all true children of the Church separated themselves from the Renovationist Council of 1923 and from the Living Church Synod, and gradually they united themselves around the Most Holy Patriarch and the bishops who were in ecclesiastical communion with him In the same way now Metropolitans Peter and Cyril, Metropolitans Joseph of Leningrad, Arsenius of Novgorod, and Agathangel of Yaroslavl, Bishop Arsenius Vicar of Moscow (formerly of Serpukhov, now retired), Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich, Archbishop Athanasius of Kiev, Bishops Dmitry of Gdov, Victor of Votkinsk, Seraphim formerly of Dmitriev (Zvezdinsky, retired), Irinarch of Great Ustiug, the Bishops in banishment, and many others, and likewise a group of the clergy of the capital and delegations authorized by communities of believers — all in various forms have declared to Metropolitan Sergius their disagreement with him and their separation from him.

Some of them declare that Sergius has stretched out his hands toward the Patriarchal Throne, striving to overturn it, inasmuch as in his Synod there are persons whom the Church does not trust. Others say that Sergius has introduced a political tendency into Church life (see his Declaration in *Izvestia*, Aug. 19, 1927). Still others indicate that Metropolitan Sergius has chosen a crooked path of diplomatic doubletalk, agreements, and compromises — as if for the salvation of the Church — and has left the straight but sorrowful path of the Cross, i.e., of patience and firmness.

Finally, he has made use of deceit, calling his Synod Orthodox and Patriarchal, while in reality its organization is a trampling down of the Church's canons: Metropolitan Peter, the *Locum Tenens*, did not give his approval for such a thing, it having failed to obtain the blessing of the Most

Holy Patriarch himself in 1924. What the Renovationists and the Gregorians could not succeed in doing — that Metropolitan Sergius very cunningly did: bound the Church to the civil authority, expressing spiritual submission to it.

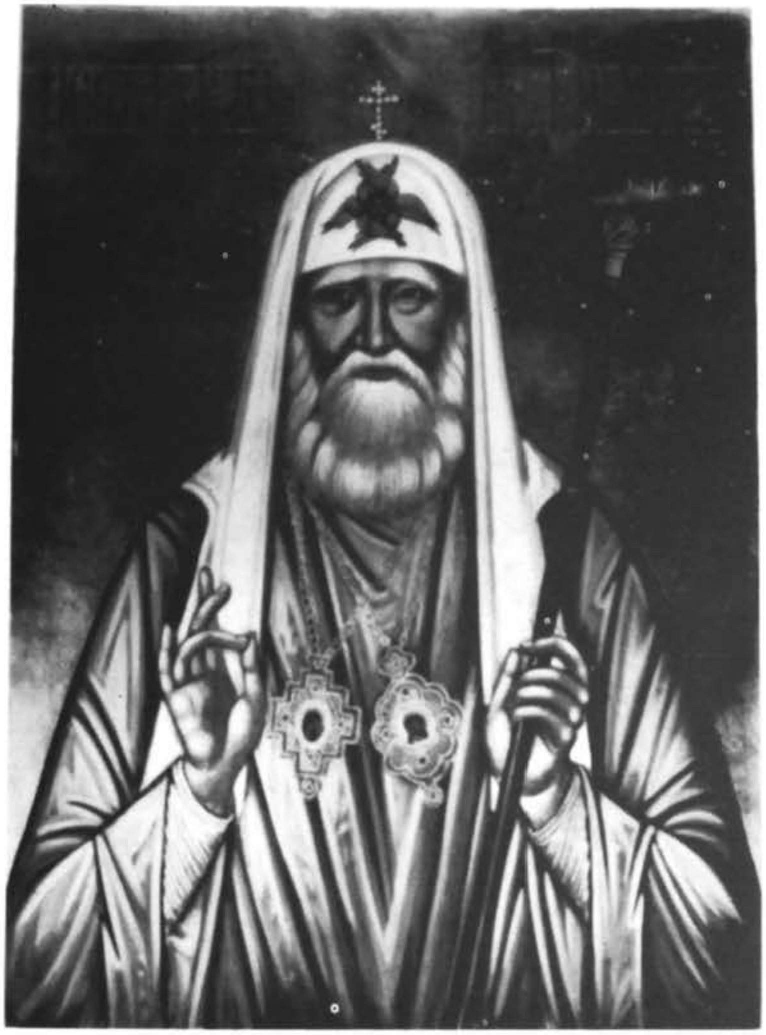
The Decree on the Separation of the Church from the Government does not exist for Sergius and his followers. Therefore, for the realization of his plans Metropolitan Sergius, violating the 9th Canon of the Council of Chalcedon, even makes use of the non-ecclesiastical power.

As for me, acknowledging my responsibility before God for the flock entrusted to me, I have declared on January 10|23 of this year to Bishop Sophronius, who has been assigned to the See of Great Ustiug by (Sergius') Synod, that my flock and clergy of Nikolsk — except for the cathedral clergy, who have been rejected by the people — cannot accept him because we have separated from Sergius and from his Synod. And on the other hand I have informed Metropolitan Joseph (of Leningrad) that I canonically join to him the clergy and laity of the Diocese of Great Ustiug, in accordance with the blessing of Vladika Irinarch, whose lawful Substitute I am at the present time for the whole Diocese of Great Ustiug.

I have had to suffer much in the way of every kind of slander and offense for my archpastoral labors for the good of the Church. If the Apostolic Canons say that clergy may do nothing without the will of their bishop, then my will expressed in the present epistle, is thereby all the more worthy of every acceptance.

Nevertheless, wishing to hear from you, dear children, that you are one in soul and one in thought with me, and likewise respecting your freedom of self-determination, I propose that my epistle be read and considered at assemblies of the faithful, so that all might know the way the matter stands and freely enter into unity with me, remaining faithful to the *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal See, Metropolitan Peter, and to the entire *Orthodox Russian Church*; concerning which I request you to send me a written statement.

Only the clergy of the Cathedral of the Lord's Meeting in Nikolsk, the priest from the Renovationists Sergius Aranovich (in Kudrilo), and Archpriest John Golubev (in Shango) have openly come out against me, spreading every kind of evil report, slander, and absurdity. They have written unfounded complaints against me to the Synod, and Archpriest Michael Krasov (of Vokhma) personally took these to Moscow; for which they have been prohibited from serving and are in a state of excommunication from me



Patriarch Tikhon, contemporary icon.
Elected to the restored Patriarchal Throne at the beginning of the most agonizing period of Russian history, he became the true Father of the believing Russian people, anathematizing the Communists and all who would ever cooperate with them, and remaining to this day a symbol of the lost freedom and manliness of the Russian Orthodox people. The True-Orthodox Church still calls itself the "Tikhonite" Church after this sole authentic Patriarch of 20th-century Russian Orthodoxy.

Protomartyr Vladimir of Kiev
while Vicar-Bishop

until they shall show sincere repentance in the form established for Renovationists, or until a complete council of bishops shall judge the case of Metr. Sergius and those who are with him (10th Canon of the Holy Apostles).

I place before you these hirelings, who see the wolf approach and flee; do not follow them, my brethren and children, but let us have before us a different example: the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. Amen.

On January 12|25, 1928, I have received the reply of Metropolitan Joseph: "Govern yourselves independently. Our justification: faithfulness to Metropolitan Peter. *Joseph.*"

Hierotheus, Bishop of Nikolsk

Sources: Polsky's ***Russia's New Martyrs***, Vol. I and II; Helen Kontzevich, "God's People Met in My Life," in *Orthodox Russia*, 1972; Andreyev's verification.

9

Bishop Victor of Glazov

AND HIS TEACHING ON THE FREEDOM OF THE CHURCH

Commemorated July 19 (†1934)

> *Know ye not that the friendship*
> *of the world is enmity with God.*
> St. James 4:4

BISHOP VICTOR (OSTROVIDOV) was the son of a church chanter. He entered a monastery early in life and spent many years there. Nonetheless, he acquired also a good theological education and in 1912 published a detailed study on "The New Theologians," criticizing a new theological trend that had found expression particularly in the book of Metropolitan (later "Patriarch") Sergius, *The Doctrine of Salvation* (Kazan, 1898).

After the Revolution of 1917 he was a vicar bishop of the Vyatka diocese, with the title of Glazov and Votkinsk, with his headquarters in Vyatka. In 1922 he was arrested and was in prison until 1925. When the "Declaration" of 1927 came out his was the first voice of protest, and his flock joined him in separating from Metr. Sergius, which led to his arrest and incarceration in the concentration camp of Solovki, where he was from 1928 to 1930, working as a bookkeeper at the rope factory a mile from the main kremlin of the former monastery of Solovki. The little house where he lived and worked was located in a clearing of the forest; deep within this forest he celebrated secret church services with other members of the Catacomb Church.

In Solovki, despite the tragic state of Soviet Russia, Bishop Victor preserved an optimistic view of the future and even tried to infect with this the more realistic Bishop Maxim of Serpukhov. But within a few years this optimism apparently vanished, for a witness who saw him in the spring of 1931 at the concentration camp of Mai Guba in the Far North heard him say:

"Ahead there is nothing but suffering." In the summer of the same year he was released from this camp and exiled for three years to the bank of the Onega River in the Archangelsk region, where, according to some reports, he was in contact with the catacomb hierarchs, Metropolitan Joseph and Bishop Damaskin. Late in 1933 he was sent to an even more remote exile in Siberia, and after this nothing more was ever heard of him.

But if little is known of the life and sufferings of this new confessor, his courageous and uncompromising spirit is set forth in the documents which he has left behind, which accuse Sergianism as a profound error that denies the very nature of the Church of Christ. (Source: Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs*, vol. 2; the "15 Questions" are from a manuscript copy.)

THE EPISTLES OF BISHOP VICTOR

LETTER TO METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

Document of December 16, 1927

Your Eminence, Merciful Archpastor, Most Revered and Dear Vladika.

IN OCTOBER, with the love of a son, I had the boldness to express to Your Eminence my sorrow over the ruinous destruction of the Orthodox Church which had been begun "as a principle of administration."

Such a destruction of the Church of God is the entirely natural and inevitable consequence of the path on which your "Declaration of July 16" has placed you, a "Declaration" which for us humble and God fearing and for all Christ-loving people is completely unacceptable.

From beginning to end it is filled with painful untruth, and it is a mockery, deeply disturbing the soul of the faithful, against the Holy Orthodox Church and against our standing in confession for God's truth. And through a betrayal of the Church of Christ to the derision of the "profane," it is a most painful renunciation of one's own salvation, a renunciation of our Lord and Saviour Himself.

This sin, as the Word of God testifies, is not less than any heresy or schism, but is rather incomparably greater, for it plunges a man immediately into the abyss of destruction, according to the Unlying Word: *Whosoever shall deny Me before men...* (St. Matt. 10: 33).

In so far as it has been in our power, we have guarded ourselves and our flock, that we may not be participants in this sin, and for this reason we sent back the "Declaration" itself. Acceptance of the Declaration would have been testimony before God of our disinterest and indifference with regard to the Most Holy Church of God, the Bride of Christ.

Out of fear of God I now find unacceptable also your decree concerning my transference: "I fear" — as one hierarch writes me — "lest an expression of obedience on our part be considered by 'them' (the Synod) as an approval of what 'they' have done." And therefore, if I were presented complete freedom of movement — which I do not have, being administratively banished — I would then ask myself: will I not have to answer before God for this obedience, for in essence it joins me to people who have separated themselves from God. And that the "Declaration" in fact is worthy of many tears, and that it separates a man from God — concerning this I have set forth my thoughts separately in the form of a letter to friends, which is here enclosed.

And what of the future? For the future I would pray the Lord — and not only I, but the whole Orthodox Church as well — that He may not harden your heart, as once He did the heart of Pharaoh, but may give you the grace to acknowledge the sin you have committed and to repent for life. Then all the faithful with joy and tears of thanksgiving to God would again come to you as to a father, pastors as to a chief pastor, and the entire Russian Church as to her sacred head. The enemy lured and seduced you a second time* with the idea of an organization of the Church. But if this organization is bought for such a price that the Church of Christ herself no longer remains as the house of grace-giving salvation for men, and he who received the organization ceases to be what he was — for it is written, *Let his habitation be made desolate, and his bishopric let another take* (Acts 1: 20) —then it were better for us never to have any kind of organization.

What is the benefit if we, having become by God's grace temples of the Holy Spirit, become ourselves suddenly worthless, while at the same time receiving an organization for ourselves? No. Let the whole visible material world perish; let there be more important in our eyes the certain perdition of the soul to which he will be subjected who presents such outward pretexts for sin.

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* Metr. Sergius had joined the 'Living Church,' and then 'repented' (*tr. n.*).

But if the hardness of your heart has gone far, and there remains no hope for repentance, even for this outcome we have a text to enlighten us: *Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not their uncleanness; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty* (II Cor. 6: 17-18).

The Brother in Christ of Your Eminence, Most
Revered Archpastor, the sincerely devoted
Bishop Victor

A LETTER TO FRIENDS

Document of December, 1927

Take heed, that ye be not deceived.
St. Luke 21: 8

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

MY BELOVED FRIENDS! With great sorrow of heart I tell you of a new deceit, through which our enemy the devil wishes to entice away the souls of Christians on to the path of perdition, depriving them of the grace of eternal salvation. And this deceit—woe to us sinners—is much more bitter than the first three: those of the Living Church, the Renovationists, and the Gregorians, whose madness was apparent to all without difficulty, whereas not everyone can see through the ruinousness of the latest deceit, and this is especially difficult for those whose mind and heart are turned toward earthly things, for the sake of which people become accustomed to renouncing the Lord. But let everyone know that the latest Declaration of July 16|29 of this year of Metropolitan Sergius — is a clear betrayal of the Truth (St. John 14: 6).

Whom have the signers of the "Declaration" betrayed, and whom have they renounced? They have renounced the Most Holy Orthodox Church, which is always and in everything pure and holy, having in herself *not spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing* (Eph. 5: 27). They have brought forth against her an open judgment before the entire world; they have bound her and given her over to the derision of the "profane," like an evil-doer, like a criminal, like a betrayer of her Most Holy Bridegroom, Christ—Eternal Truth, Eternal Justice. What a horrible thing...

The Holy Church, which the Lord *hath purchased with His own blood* (Acts 20: 28) from out of this world, and which is His Body (Col. 1: 24), and for all of us is the house of eternal grace-given salvation from this life of perdition — now this Divine Holy Church of Christ is adapted to the service of interests not only foreign to her, but even completely incompatible with her Divinity and spiritual freedom. Many Christians step forth as *enemies of the cross of Christ,* says the Apostle; they *mind earthly things* (politics), forgetting that *our dwelling is in heaven* (Phil. 3: 18-20) — *for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come* (Heb. 13: 14). And what kind of unification can there be of the Church of God with the civil authority, whatever kind it may be, when the aims of the latter's activity are exclusively in a material-economic direction, and while externally these aims might be moral but are foreign to faith in God or even hostile to God. At the same time, the aims of the Church's activity are exclusively spiritual and moral, and through faith in God they bring a man beyond the bounds of earthly life for the acquiring of God's grace of eternal heavenly goods. *Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God* (St. James 4: 4).

Therefore the Church of Christ by her very nature can never be any kind of political organization, or else it ceases to be the Church of Christ, the Church of God, the Church of eternal salvation. And if now through the "Declaration" the Church is united to the civil regime, this is no simple external maneuver, but, together with a terrible outrage, a destruction of the Orthodox Church, there is also committed here the monstrous sin of renouncing the Truth of the Church, a sin which no attainments of earthly goods for the Church can justify. Do not tell me that in this way a Central Administration has been formed and local administrations are being formed, and the appearance of external calm for the Church is obtained, or, as the Declaration says, "a legal existence of the Church" — all those who earlier were caught by our enemy the devil and fell away from the Orthodox Church also love to say these and similar things. But what is the benefit if we ourselves, having been made and being called temples of God (II Cor. 4: 16), have become worthless and abominable in the eyes of God, while receiving an external administration for ourselves? Rather, may we never have any kind of administration, may we wander, even having nowhere to lay our head, after the fashion of those of whom it was once said: *They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth* (Heb. 11: 37, 38). But by means of such sufferings may Orthodox souls be preserved in the grace of salvation, of which all they are deprived who are caught by the devil with such external pretexts. *Woe unto the world because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come*; every soul is to be tried and every place sifted, so that the grain may be separated from the straw, even if in small quantity, since there are few *chosen*, said the Lord; *but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!* (St. Matt. 18: 7). But let us, my friends, give no offence to the Church of God, that we may not be condemned at the Lord's Judgment.

Take heed that ye be not deceived; for many shall come in My name... and shall deceive many, warns the Lord (St. Luke 21: 8). And the holy Apostle, showing his care for us, says: *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil* (Eph. 5: 15, 16).

May the Lord not harden the hearts of those who signed the Declaration, but may they repent and turn and may their sins be washed away. But if it be not so, then let us guard ourselves from communion with them, knowing that communion with those who have fallen away is our own renunciation of Christ the Lord.

My friends, if we truly believe that outside the Orthodox Church a man has no salvation, then when her truth is perverted we cannot remain her indifferent worshippers in the dark, but we must confess before everyone the truth of the Church. And if others, even in an innumerable multitude, even chief hierarchs, remain indifferent and can even use their interdictions against us, there is nothing surprising in this. After all, this has happened not infrequently in the past, and thus it was four years ago that those who had fallen away from the truth composed councils and called themselves the Church of God and, pretending to be concerned over canons, made interdictions against those who did not submit to their senselessness; but they did all this to their shame and to their eternal perdition.

But the Lord is faithful, Who shall stablish you, and keep you from the evil one... And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ (II Thes. 3: 3, 5).

Bishop Victor

THE REPLIES OF BISHOP VICTOR TO 15 QUESTIONS OF THE GPU ON THE "DECLARATION" OF METR. SERGIUS

Document of January 18, 1928

The questions themselves have survived only in the form of brief indications, if at all. Some of the replies, containing duplications or relating more to the political aspect, have been omitted or shortened.

1. "How would you interpret, from the civil and ecclesiastical points of view, the appearance of the new church tendency — the platform of the Declaration of July 29, 1927?"

From the ecclesiastical point of view: as an incorrect teaching on the Church and on the matter of our salvation in Jesus Christ — an error of principle by Metropolitan Sergius....

2. "How do you look at the 'Declaration'? etc."

The "Declaration" is a separation from the truth of salvation. It looks on salvation as on a natural moral perfection of man; it is a pagan philosophical doctrine of salvation, and for its realization an external organization is absolutely essential. In my opinion, this is the same error of which, as early as 1912, I accused Metropolitan Sergius....

I myself grew up among simple people, the son of a church reader, and I have spent my whole life among simple people, in monasteries. As the people believes, so believe I, namely: We believe that we are saved in Christ Jesus by the Grace of God; this Grace of God is present only in the Orthodox Church and is given to us through the Holy Sacraments, and that the Church herself is the house of grace-given salvation from this life of perdition, not some kind of political organization. As a grace-giving union of believers, the Church can be without, and it should not have, any political organization among its members; the Roman Catholic Church teaches otherwise. The Church's members, as citizens, have a political civil organization common for everyone, where they are in dependence on the civil authority.

3. The Synod appeared without the blessing of Metr. Peter, who is the temporary head of the Russian Orthodox Church. Metr. Sergius, in convening it, exceeded his authority; he was entrusted only with a temporary guardiancy of the Church, a satisfaction of the pressing spiritual needs of the faithful; but he began a complete overhaul of the Church. He is not the master of the House of God, but only a guardian of the House; therefore my relationship to the Synod and to its whole platform is negative.

4. The question of the Synod's membership does not have a great significance as far as its unacceptability is concerned. Its very platform is unacceptable, for it sees in the Church an external political organization, which it unites with the civil organization of the regime of the USSR, and conformably with this it sees a political activity for the Orthodox Church, and in this way it pushes the Church on the path toward more shocks and unexpected happenings, and together with this it perverts *the very nature of the Church.* By her inner nature the Church should be not of this world, and precisely by virtue of those spiritual interests which she satisfies for her faithful members. She is a grace giving union for the grace-given salvation of believing citizens.

5. I propose to keep myself separate from the Synod until a part shall be taken in Church life by Metropolitan Peter or Metropolitan Cyril, in whose *Orthodoxy* I have no grounds to doubt.

6. "On further development of the battle against the new tendency."

I personally, both up to this time and in the future, have no intention of waging any kind of battle, and I only defend myself and my flock so that we will not be partakers of the sins of others, of the "Synod." To those near to me who appeal to me concerning the new tendency of Church life, I explain it as I myself understand it. Farther than this the matter has not gone and, I think, will not go, in view of the fact that I am too insignificant a person in comparison with Metropolitan Sergius and the Synod. And besides, I do not consider myself capable of any kind of administrative, organizational activity, since I have never had any experience of it.

7. "On the aims..."

Solely the salvation of one's soul, since I believe that they, the "Synodalists," are destroying Orthodoxy, making it worldly, making it earthly and completely perverting the nature of the Orthodox Church.

8. "On methods and manners of battle, etc."

I have not had any definite method and manner of hattle at all. I, together with several, not all, priests and laymen, have declared to Metropolitan Sergius that we reject his spiritual guidance, unless he acknowledges his mistake of dragging the Church into worldly tasks not proper to her, and thus renounces his "Declaration" of July 29.

9. "How has the hattle been waged?..."

Up to the present time there has been no battle in the precise meaning of this word. We have only separated ourselves from those who declare to us: "We are your superiors, and therefore we put you under interdict for disobedience," and the like. However, as concerns the pastors and laymen subject to me, and all the more anyone else, I have not undertaken any kind of interdictions, threats, curses, deprivations, or the manifestation of any kind of malice, and I will never do so, because the matter of faith, of salvation, is a matter of freedom, of conscience, of choice, and not coercion.

12. I am a servant of salvation, and those who seek their eternal spiritual salvation can always find in me help in clarifying the truth. But as it seems to me, the simple people who fear to fall away from Orthodoxy are more interested in this, while the pastors, unfortunately, remain more indifferent and disinterested, even though they are theologically educated.

13. "On watchwords, etc."

The Orthodox Church is the sole grace-giving Church, in which by God's grace our salvation from this life of perdition is accomplished. The falling away from Orthodoxy of the "Renovationists," as well as the perversion of the nature of the Orthodox Church by the "Synodalists," deprive a man of the grace of salvation.

14. "On the unity of the Church and its relation to the Government."

The unity of the Church can be only one of grace, and not of the civil sphere; for us, according to the word of God, place, nationality, etc., make no difference. An Orthodox Japanese is just as dear to me as an Orthodox Russian.

A purely political civil organization of the faithful is possible only as an auxiliary tool of the civil authority, as was the case before the Revolution. The government alone knows the whole external life of a man, while the Church knows only the exclusively spiritual needs of the faithful as well as everything pertaining to prayer. We do not protest against the decree on the separation of Church and State, but unfortunately the Government does not believe the sincerity of our declarations of this.

BISHOP VICTOR

A LETTER TO PASTORS (EXCERPTS)

Document of February 28, 1928

> *Whosoever of you are justified by the law, are left without Christ; ye are fallen from grace.*
> Gal. 5: 4

AND THIS THEIR FALL is not a small one, nor hidden, but very great, and evident to all who have the mind (of Christ) (1 Cor. 2: 16); and it was revealed in the well-known "Declaration" of July 16|29 and in the brazen destruction of the Orthodox Church which has followed upon it.

The "Declaration" of those who have fallen into deception is an abominable barter of the priceless and unbarterable, that is, our spiritual freedom in Christ (St. John 8: 36); it is their attempt, in contradiction to the Word of God, to unite what cannot be united: the lot of the sinner with the work of Christ, God and Mammon (St. Matt. 6: 24) and light with darkness (II Cor. 6: 14-18). The apostates have converted the Church of God from a union of grace-given salvation for man from sin and eternal perdition, into a political organization, which they have joined to the organization of the civil authority in the service of this world which lies in evil (1 John 5: 19). Quite another thing is the loyalty of individual believers with relation to the civil authority. In the latter condition the Church preserves her spiritual freedom in Christ, and believers become confessors when the faith is persecuted; but in the former condition the Church is only an obedient tool for the realization of political ideas by the civil authority, and confessors for the faith are thus manifested as state criminals.

All this we see in the activity of Metropolitan Sergius, who, by virtue of his new relationship to the civil authority, is compelled to forget the canons of the Orthodox Church; and in defiance of them he has removed all bishop-confessors from their sees, considering them state criminals, and in their places he has arbitrarily assigned other bishops who are not acknowledged and cannot be acknowledged by the believing people. For Metropolitan Sergius there now can no longer be the very phenomenon of confessing for the Church, and therefore he declares in his interview in connection with the Declaration, that any member of the clergy who shall dare to say anything at all in defense of the Truth of God against the civil authority is an enemy of the Orthodox

Church. What is this but the madness that has seized one who has fallen into deception? For, if we reason thus, we shall have to consider as an enemy of God, for example, St. Philip, who once accused Ivan the Terrible and for this was strangled; and even more than this, we must number among the enemies of God the great Forerunner, who accused Herod and for this was beheaded.

...This is why St. Maximus the Confessor, when the attempt was made to persuade him and to force him by terrible tortures to enter into communion in prayer with the false opinioned patriarch, exclaimed: "Even if the whole universe shall enter into communion with the Patriarch, I alone will not." Why was this? Because he feared to lose his soul through communion with a patriarch who had been drawn into impiety, even though at that time he had not been condemned by a council, but on the contrary was defended by a majority of the bishops. For the administrative authority of the Church, even when assembled in council in earlier times also, has not always defended the Truth, of which there is clear testimony in the cases of St. Athanasius the Great, St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, St. Theodore the Studite, and others. How then can I remain in future senselessly indifferent? This cannot be. And this is why we have set ourselves upon the only possible way out of our present situation — the path of confessing the Truth of salvation. This path is difficult, it is a path of struggle; but we do not hope in our own powers, but rather look to *Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith* (Heb. 12: 2), and our work is not a separation from the Church, but a defense of the Truth and a justification of the Divine commandments, or what is even better, the guarding of the whole economy of our salvation. This is why a whole array of archpastors has stepped forth accusing Metropolitan Sergius: Metropolitans (Joseph, Agathangel, Arsenius), Archbishops, Bishops, and a multitude of individual pastors, who declare to Metr. Sergius that they can no longer acknowledge him as the guide of the Orthodox Church, but that for the time being they will govern themselves independently.

See to it, then, my friends and fellow pastors, that you be not drawn away by the spiritual beasts. The previous fall, not long ago, is sufficient; now we shall walk circumspectly. May *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding* (Phil. 4: 7) fill your hearts and minds and may it direct your path in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Bishop Victor (seal with initials)

10

Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich

FORMER APOSTLE OF ALASKA AND AMERICA

Commemorated December 12 (†1935)

> *A true Christian is a warrior fighting his way through the regiments of the unseen enemy to his heavenly homeland.*
>
> St. Herman of Alaska

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1930 there came to the just-begun construction of the White Sea Canal* some convoys of prisoners from Solovki. They were received and first of all sent to the bathhouse for "sanitizing"—that is, disinfection of the clothes they were wearing, and a compulsory shaving with a machine of the hair on their head, face, and whole body. Then there was a medical examination by the physicians who were themselves prisoners. Here for the first time, when I was working as a physicians' helper at this station, I saw Archbishop Seraphim, a tall, bent-over old man with his head and face already shaved under machine number one. Often, when talking with him after this, I learned much from him, and from other bishops who had come with him I learned also about him; of these latter I shall name only Archbishop Pachomius of Chernigov, for the younger ones might still be in the torture-chambers now, and every mention of them in the ptess will increase the weight of their bonds.

Archbishop Seraphim, in the world surnamed Samoilovich, was born about 1882 and studied at the Poltava Theological Seminary. He became a monk at a young age in one of the southern dioceses after several years of teaching in the seminary. He was assigned at the beginning of our century as a missionary in the Aleutian-Alaskan Diocese of the United States of America, where he was a fervent fellow-laborer with Bishop Tikhon, the future Patriarch. Bishop Tikhon highly valued this zealous missionary, who united personal asceticism and an intelligent approach both to the half-wild Aleut flock and to the American government in Alaska. He spent six years in all in America.

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* One of the notorious Soviet slave-labor projects of the 1930's in northern Russia.

After Bishop Tikhon was assigned to Yaroslavl in 1907, he called Hieromonk Seraphim and assigned him as Abbot of the Tolga Monastery, four miles above Yaroslavl, which was the summer residence of the Yaroslavl bishop. Anyone who has travelled along the Volga before 1920 will remember how, when the ship stopped at the Monastery dock, the crew and passengers would go down to the dock and pray at a moleben before a copy of the Tolga Icon of the Mother of God (whose feast is August 8/21), venerating the holy image, and how the ship would depart while the Monastery choir was still singing "Queen of the world, be our intercessor."

Father Seraphim wrote a serious historical work, *A History of the Tolga Monastery, 1314-1915*, in preparation for the celebration of the six-hundreth anniversary of the Monastery in August, 1914. For the benefit of the Monastery and the surrounding flock, he built and opened in 1913, a mile from the Monastery at the edge of a splendid forest, a school of bee-keeping for the orphan children the Monastery looked after. Three weeks before the six-hundreth anniversary of the Monastery, however, the First World War broke out. The Abbot, in the very first days of the War, built hospital wards and actively helped Archbishop Agafangel in the governing of the Diocese during the years of war and revolution. His courage and presence of mind saved the Monastery from destruction in the summer of 1918, when the Communist Chekists ran about in the days of the "Yaroslavl Uprising" into the cells, basements, and grave vaults in the Monastery cemetery in search of "rebels." 350 innocent Yaroslavl citizens were executed by firing squad as a reply to the assassination of the military governor, Commissar Nahimson, and the Economic Commissar Zakgeim.

Soon Father Seraphim was transferred to Uglich, where he was made abbot of the Protection Monastery and raised to the rank of Archimandrite. In 1920 he was ordained bishop in Uglich, a diocese filled with the memory of the Tsarevich who, 329 years before the martyred Tsarevich Alexis of our own days, had received the same kind of cruel end.*

In 1915 Bishop Seraphim was raised to the rank of Archbishop, and in the difficult and confused days after the death of Patriarch Tikhon he was

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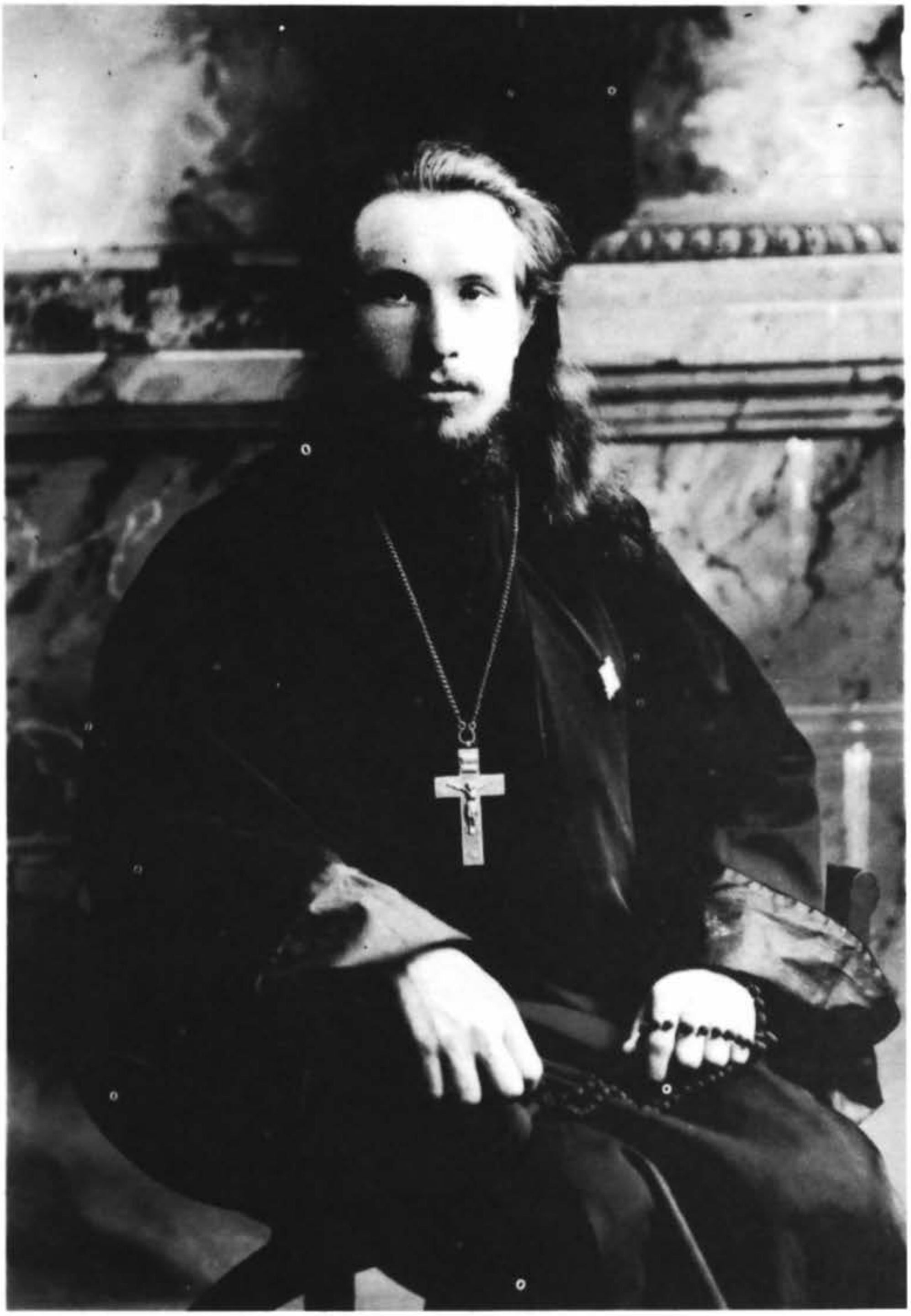
* The Tsarevich Dimitry, who was killed in 1589 at the instigation of Boris Godunov; commemorated in the Orthodox calendar on May 15.



Archbishop Seraphim, when Abbot of Tolga Monastery

Russian School. Sitka Alaska

Archbishop Seraphim and Fr. A.P. Kashevaroff
with the students of the Russian Church School in Sitka, Alaska
at the time when Patriarch Tikhon was Bishop in America.

appointed (in 1926) as one of the Substitutes of the Patriarchial Locum Tenens, and occupied this position from November, 1926, to March, 1927 (the period when Metropolitan Sergius was under arrest). Archbishop Seraphim categorically refused to issue a declaration of collaboration with the Soviet authorities, which the latter were demanding at this time (the same declaration which Metr. Sergius was later to issue), saying that "I do not consider myself authorized to decide basic questions of principle without the hierarchs who are in prison." On December 16/29, 1926, he addressed the episcopate of the Russian Church with this message: "I implore my colleagues, the bishops, to help me to bear the heavy and responsible cross of the governance of the Russian Church; I beg you to cut your correspondence and relations with me to the minimum, leaving all except matters of principle and those affecting the whole Church (as, for example, the selection and ordination of bishops) to be decided locally."**

All the predecessors of Archbishop Seraphim in the position of Substitute of Locum Tenens were in prison, and he knew that the same fate was awaiting him as well as the successor he would choose in case of his own arrest. Therefore, when entering into the exercise of the authority of this position, in December, 1926, he did not assign any successor. When, at his interrogation by the GPU, he was asked: "Who will be the head of the Church if we do not free you?" he only replied: "The Lord Jesus Christ Himself." At this reply, the astonished interrogator looked at him and said: "All of you Bishops have left substitutes for yourselves, as did Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter." "Well, I myself have left the Church to the Lord God," repeated Archbishop Seraphim, "and I have done this on purpose. Let it be known to the whole world how freely Orthodox Christians are living in a free government."*

Three days later Archbishop Seraphim was freed and sent to Uglich, and he governed the Church until March, 1927, when he gave over the government to Metropolitan Sergius, who had just been freed from prison.

** Facts and quotes in this paragraph have been added from I.M. Andreyev, *A Brief Survey of the History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to Our Days*, Jordanville, 1951, p. 49; and Lev Regelson, *The Tragedy of the Russian Church*, YMCA Press, Paris, 1977, p. 584 (both in Russian).

* This incident is as related in the *Messenger of the Russian Student Christian Movement*, no. 7, July, 1927.

Four months later Archbishop Seraphim accused the apostasy of Metropolitan Sergius (the Declaration of July 16/29, 1927), and soon he was arrested and sentenced to five years in concentration camp, being sent to Solovki. There almost the whole time he languished at the common labors. Once when dragging bricks in the construction of a two-storey building, he fell from a ladder and broke a rib, which healed poorly and made him an invalid. But no kind of persecution could break his powerful will.

I myself saw him for the first time after his arrival with the convoy of prisoners from Solovki in the autumn of 1930 at the assignment point called "New Birzha," near the northern semaphore station "Mai-Gub," on the Murmansk Railroad.

Later I was able to have a closer acquaintance with him. Having gone on invalid status, he often was in the ambulatory section, and we, the physicians' helpers, tried to help him; he was suffering from chronic pleuritis as well as a decompensated miocarditis and general arteriosclerosis.

Once, at the end of October on a damp, inclement day, passing by the disinfection cabin, where things were disinfected behind a hermetically-sealed door, with a prisoner-invalid for a watchman outside the room to keep robbers out, I heard myself called by name. Going up, I saw Archbishop Seraphim, numb with cold, standing watch. "They put us invalids at this post for two hours at a time, but I have been standing here from twelve noon and they haven't sent anyone to replace me." (It was then about 6 p.m.) I ran to the invalid barracks. "Where is the chief?" "He went to the movies," replied the clerk. "Tell him that I am going to make a report to the Head of the Sanitary Division, that he is keeping prisoner Samoilovich at an outdoor post for six hours instead of two." The clerk roused himself and ran to the movie house. Ten minutes later he ran back. "The chief has ordered him to be replaced, and asks you not to make a report." "Good, but in ten minutes I will check."

And in fact, he woke up a decrepit colonel who was dozing on a board-bed and sent him running to replace Vladika. The old man ran to the disinfection room. Half an hour later I again went into the barracks. The numb Archbishop with satisfaction was drinking some hot tea from a cup, and I wished him a good rest.

He was considered a "prohibited one"—that is, he had no right to go out of the camp into the administrative buildings outside the barbed-wire fence.

Once he asked me to call Archimandrite Gury Yegorov, who worked in the Financial Division and was a fierce supporter of Metropolitan Sergius; later he was freed from exile, having finished his five-year term in concentration camp in 1934, and in 1946 was ordained Bishop. From that time on he was head of the "Patriarchal" Church in Central Asia, with the title Bishop of Tashkent and Central Asia.

Archimandrite Gury frowned. "After all, the Archbishop is not 'ours,' and it's not fitting for me even to talk with him. I have no right to receive a blessing from him."

"No one is asking this of you, Father Gury. But after all, he is a prohibited one, and you and I have passes. If, knowing who you are, he has asked you to come to him in camp," I protested, "can we, ourselves prisoners, refuse to visit a prisoner in the camp, even if he is a heretic? A physicians' helper shouldn't have to teach an Archimandrite." He was upset and came with me. I accompanied him to the ambulatory section and left him together with the Archbishop, whom I had summoned there.

The handsome forty-year-old Archimandrite-bookkeeper, bending his head, spoke with the bent-over, decrepit Archbishop. What they talked about, I don't know.

In March, 1932, Vladika was freed six months before the end of his term, counting (in accordance with the decree of 1931) five days of labor equal to six. This was arranged for him by the pious prisoners of the bookkeeping division, who counted the working days in such a way as to reduce the term. In 1934 this "liberal" decree was revoked.

Archbishop Seraphim was sent by convoy into exile into the region of Komi, where the Zyryani people live, to the north of Vyatka. He grew weaker in body, but was firm in spirit. He considered that *in an epoch of persecutions there should not be any single centralized Church government.* A bishop should govern his diocese independently. In exile he should be the head of the secret Church wherever he is staying; he should ordain secret priests and perform secret monastic tonsures.

From believers I heard that Archbishop Seraphim did not return from exile. His sentence ended in 1935. It is said, vaguely, that he died somewhere without medical help, in deprivation—which is easy to believe for anyone who knew the condition of his ailing heart, even in 1932.

The ailing Archbishop Seraphim was often brought to my mind in my wanderings in prisons and exiles, when, deprived of physical contact with believers, I mentally remembered him in prayer. I thought of his meekly-smiling, exhausted face, and bowing down in prayer I would literally feel on my head his thin, rough Archpastoral hand covered with scars.

EPISTLE OF
ARCHBISHOP SERAPHIM OF UGLICH

Archbishop Seraphim wrote several epistles protesting the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. As a vicar of the Yaroslavl Diocese, he signed, together with Metropolitan Agafangel, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd (who was in Yaroslavl at the time), Archbishop Barlaam of Perm, and Bishop Eugene of Rostov, a statement of separation from Metropolitan Sergius on February 6, 1928 (Russian text in Polsky, vol. II, pp. 10-11). At the same time he sent the following epistle to Metr. Sergius in his own name. The tone of courageous protest, based not on any narrow "letter of the law" but on heartfelt concern for the good of Christ's Church, coupled with sincere compassion shown for the erring Metropolitan Sergius, make this one of the classic documents of the founding bishops of Russia's Catacomb Church.

Later, in the summer of 1928, Archbishop Seraphim sent a new epistle accusing Metr. Sergius of the serious sin of "drawing our faint-hearted and infirm brethren into neo-renovationism" (cited in Regelson. p. 585).

EXHORTATION OF ARCHBISHOP SERAPHIM OF UGLICH, ADDRESSED TO METROPOLITAN SERGIUS AND GIVEN TO HIM ON JANUARY 27/FEBRUARY 9, 1928*

Your Eminence:

The period of more than half a year which has passed since the issuance by you of the Declaration of July 16/29, 1927, has indicated that all your hopes for a "peaceful arrangement" of our church matters, for bringing our whole church government into proper order and arrangement, have been in vain, and your "confidence in the possibility of our peaceful life and activity within the bounds of the law" is completely unrealizable and under the present conditions can never come into being.

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* Translated from the Russian text in Polsky, vol. II, pp. 16-18.

On the contrary, facts almost every day testify that for Orthodox people it has become even more difficult to live. It is especially difficult to acknowledge that you, who so wisely and firmly held the banner of Orthodoxy in the first period of being the Substitute of the Locum Tenens, have now gone off the straight path and have gone into the byway of compromises which are against the Church.

You have subjected us to the sphere of terrible moral torments, and you have made yourself the first of such tormented ones, for you must suffer both for yourself and for us. Previously we suffered and endured in silence, knowing we were suffering for the truth, and that the power of God was with us and could not be conquered by any sufferings. This power is what strengthened us and inspired us with the hope that at a time known to God alone the truth of Orthodoxy would be triumphant, for to it alone is promised unfailingly that whenever needful the almighty help of God will be given to it.

By your Declaration and the church policy founded upon it, you are trying to lead us into a sphere where we will now be deprived of this hope, for you are leading us away from the service of truth; and God does not help lies.

We are loyal citizens of the USSR. We obediently fulfill all the commands of the Soviet authority. We have never intended and do not intend to rebel against it, but we wish to be honorable and upright members also of the Church of Christ on earth and not to "repaint it in Soviet colors," because we know that this is useless, and that serious and upright people will not believe it.

While it is still not too late, while this terrible abyss has not yet entirely overwhelmed you, this abyss which is ready to swallow you ingloriously and forever, gather together your intellectual and moral powers which not long ago were still strong; stand up in all your spiritual stature; issue another declaration to correct the first one, or at least one similar to the one which you sent in the first period when you were the Substitute of the Locum Tenens; cut with the grace-given impulses of the Spirit the chains which bind you, and come out into holy freedom. All the true sons of the Church will pray to God for you; all the good shepherds and courageous archpastors will immediately be on your side. All the many sufferers will embrace you spiritually—this voice of witnesses of pure truth who are exiled from their flocks and the brethren; the unconquerable Truth itself will be for you. It will show you the further path; it will preserve and defend you.

Dear Vladika: I can imagine how you must suffer! But why do you, experiencing these sufferings yourself, not desire to lighten them for those who at one time trusted you? With what joy I gave over to you my own rights as Substitute of the Locum Tenens, believing that your wisdom and experience would cooperate with you in the governance of the Church.

But what happened? Can this fatal act really not be corrected? Will you really not find the courage to acknowledge your error, your fatal mistake, the issuance by you of the Declaration of July 16/29, 1927? You wrote to me and sincerely believed that the path you have chosen will bring peace to the Church. And what do you hear and see now? A frightful groan is carried up from all the ends of Russia. You promised to pull out two or three sufferers here and there and return them to the society of the faithful; but look how many new sufferers have appeared, whose sufferings are made yet deeper by the awareness that they are the result of your new church policy. Does this groan of the sufferers from the shores of the Oba and Enisei Rivers, from the far-off islands of the White Sea, from the deserts beyond the Caspian Sea, from the mountain ridges of Turkestan—does this groan not reach to your heart?

How could you, by your Declaration, place upon them and upon many the stigma of opponents of the present civil order, when they and we in our spiritual nature have always been foreign to politics, guarding strictly, with self-sacrifice, the purity of Orthodoxy?

Is it for me, who am younger, to write these lines to you? Is it for me to reach an experienced and learned Hierarch of the Russian Church? Still, the voice of my conscience compels me again and again to disturb your spacious and good heart. Show courage; acknowledge your fatal mistake, and if it is impossible for you to issue a new declaration, then for the good of the Church, give over the authority and the rights of the Substitute of the Locum Tenens to someone else.

I have the right to write you these lines and make this offer, for many now reproach me, saying that I handed over these rights of the Substitute to you hastily and without reservation.

Having experienced myself this burden of church governance, I believe that in the quiet of your cell you are shedding bitter tears and are in a frightful anguish of spirit. And we pity you and weep together with you.

And if there are separations of dioceses and parishes from you and your "Synod," this is an alarm-bell, a frightful alarm-bell of the exhausted hearts of the faithful, one that should be able to reach your heart and ignite it with the flame of self-sacrifice and readiness to lay down your life for your friends . . .

May the Lord help you and bless your courageous decision, which your archpastoral conscience will whisper to you and which we do not dictate to you, but with filial love offer to you for the salvation of your soul and the good of the Church.

It seems to me that one way out of the situation that has been created would be for you and all the faithful in our land who think in an Orthodox way to direct your gaze to the eldest Hierarch of the Russian Church, His Eminence Agathangel, Metropolitan of Yaroslavl.

Go to him with love and trust. Despite his advanced age, he has remained wise and powerful in spirit. His appeal from Perm was an act of zeal for the salvation of the Church. Stretch out your brotherly hands to him, give him a warm, brotherly greeting, ask him to help you out of this terrible and burdensome situation, and hand over to him your rights as Substitute until His Eminence, Metropolitan Peter, should return to power.

We archpastors, together with you, will help him in the governance of the Church with whatever strength and understanding we have, even without the organization of a "Synod."

Seraphim, Archbishop of Uglich, Vicar of the
Yaroslavl Diocese, Former Substitute of the
Patriarchal Locum Tenens.
Jan. 24/Feb. 6, 1928.

Sources: Polsky's *Russia's New Martyrs,* Vol. II, pp. 12-16. The author (who has also used the pen-names of S. Nesterov and Alexei Rostov) is still living in Italy, and is a correspondent for the Russian newspaper *Nasha Strana,* Buenos Aires, Argentina. Michael Z. Vinokouroff, memoires.

11

Bishop Alexis Bui of Voronezh

AND THE BLESSED FOOL FOR CHRIST'S SAKE THEOKTISTA

Commemorated February 12 (†1936)

> ***Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.***
> I Cor. 3:18-19

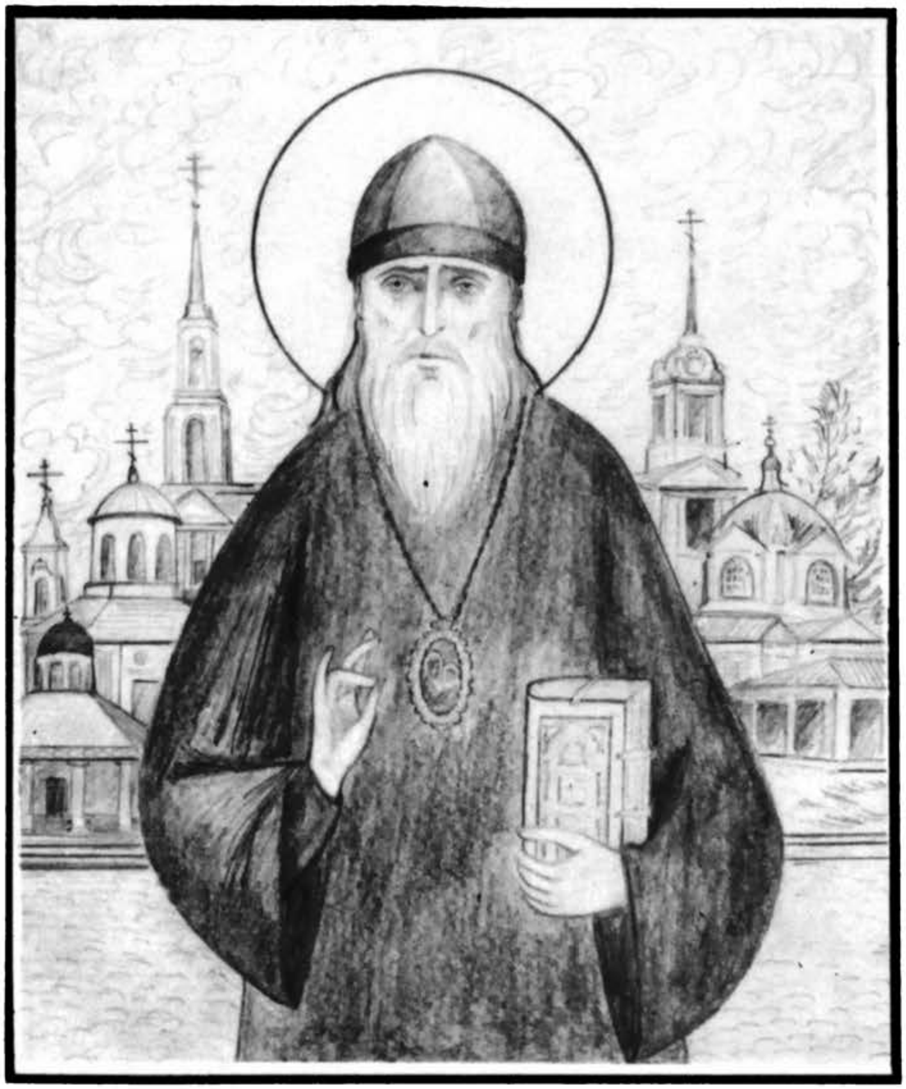
THE CITY OF VORONEZH is located in the heart of Holy Russia, not far from the holy monasteries of Optina, Sarov, and Glinsk with their holy elders who handed down the true Orthodox spiritual tradition even to our century.

Voronezh itself is at the center of a diocese which in 1903 counted 18 monasteries, 2500 monks and nuns, over 1000 churches and chapels, and nearly 3000 non-monastic clergy. The spiritual heart of the city was the Annunciation Monastery of St. Metrophanes, which treasured the relics of this great 18th-century saint, the first bishop of Voronezh. Later in the 18th century another great saint was bishop here: St. Tikhon, who ended his days in retirement not far away in the Zadonsk monastery. Another holy man (as yet uncanonized), Anthony, was bishop of Voronezh in the 19th century and was responsible for the canonization of both of his holy predecessors.

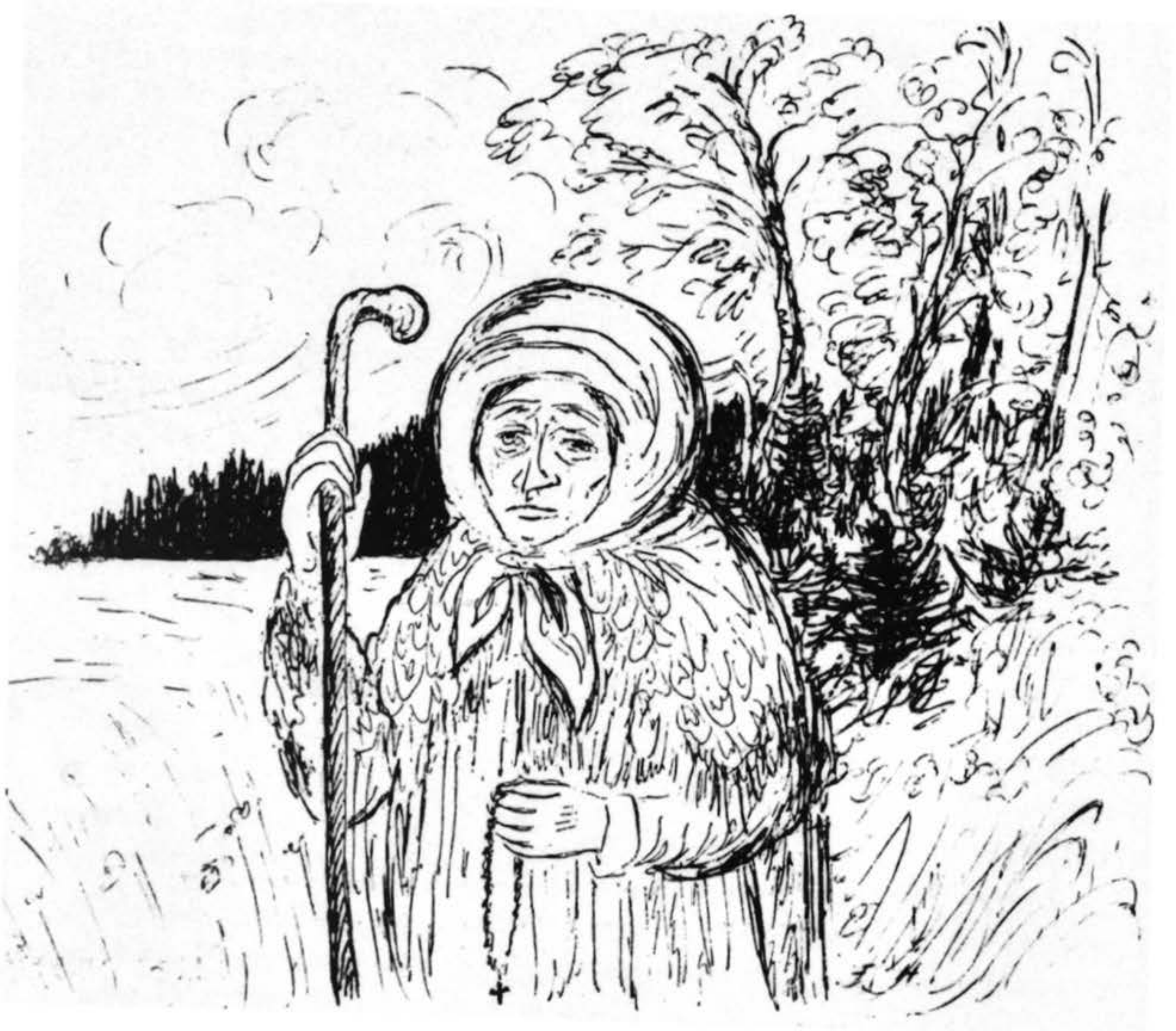
Another important monastery in Voronezh was the St. Alexis Monastery, with 30 monks before the Revolution; and the chief women's monastery was the Holy Protection Convent, with 600 sisters.

I.

After the Revolution of 1917, Voronezh was a leading battlefield in the Civil War, in which many died. From the beginning of the Revolution Voronezh was glorious for its new martyrs, of whom a few may be listed here:



Bishop Alexis Bui of Voronezh
(iconographic sketch)



Blessed Theoktista Michailovna

Father George Snesarev, priest of the hospital church of the Sign of the Mother of God in Voronezh, was martyred in 1919. He was scalped (the skin and hair removed from his head) and given 63 wounds. Nails and pins were driven under his fingernails and toenails. He was so mutilated that it was almost impossible to recognize him; his relatives recognized him only by his hands.

In 1919, when the Red Army entered and the White Army left Voronezh, *seven nuns* of the Protection Convent were boiled in a cauldron with tar because they hda a moleben served for members of the White Army.

Hieromonk Nektary (Ivanov), an instructor in the Voronezh Seminary who had graduated from the Moscow Theological Academy, was killed in 1918 by means of various tortures of the cruelest sort: he was dragged by the feet, his arms and legs broken, wooden nails were driven into him, he was "given communion" with molten pewter. The martyr prayed: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Lord."

Archimandrite Dimitry was killed in 1918 after being scalped.

There were other martyrs also in nearby towns.

The chief hierarch of the diocese at this time was Metropolitan Vladimir of Voronezh. In July, 1925, Archbishop Peter (Zverev) was sent to help the ailing Metropolitan, who died at Christmas of the same year. In 1926, on November 15, Archbishop Peter himself served for the last time in Voronezh. The next day he was arrested by the GPU and sent away on a train, and in 1929 he died in Solovki. A number of the letters from Solovki of this holy new martyr have survived (Polsky, vol. 2, pp. 56-66).

II.

After the departure of Archbishop Peter, Bishop Alexis (Bui), a vicar-bishop of the Voronezh diocese, took over the administration of the diocese. Bishop Alexis was tall and thin, an inspired preacher, a great faster and a true monk. He did not have a theological education, and had been Superior of a monastery in Kozlov. He celebrated the Divine services with heedful concentration.

This was a very difficult time, in Voronezh as in the whole of Russia. The Revolution had brought profound anarchy and disturbance; the persecution of the Church went on unabated, and the secret police used every conceivable trick in order to trap people into "illegal" actions or statements. In Voronezh the GPU did its best to arouse disagreements between members of the clergy in order to use the words of the disputants, as reported by spies, as accusations against them. At the same time, Holy Russia was still alive, and there were still holy people as in earlier centuries; in Voronezh there was the holy woman Theoktista Michaelovna (see below).

Just at this time, in mid-1927, the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius was published, and Voronezh was divided like the rest of Russia. All eyes were on Bishop Alexis, and he responded with a bold rejection of the Declaration and his announcement that he had chosen to be a follower of Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd.

This Epistle was signed also by six of the leading priests of Voronezh: Archpriests John Andreyevsky, Nicholas Piskanovsky, Peter Novosiltsev, Paul Smirnsky, Alexander Philippenko, and John Steblin-Kamensky. These brave priests suffered for this in the folowing ways:

Archpriest John Andreyevsky had an immense significance in the support of Orthodoxy in Voronezh. First he rose up against Renovationism, then he disagreed with Metropolitan Sergius. He was arrested in 1928 and exiled to Central Asia. When Bishop Alexis heard of his arrest, he came the same day fearlessly to the church where the priest had been serving and comforted his grieving flock. After returning from exile, Father John disappeared from sight and was not heard of again.

Archpriest Nicholas Piskanovsky was arrested and sent to Solovki, where he remained from 1928 to his death, probably in 1932. He made fishing nets there, while saying the Jesus Prayer constantly. He was the spiritual father of the whole of the Catacomb clergy and faithful in the Solovki concentration camp. All the bishops on Solovki who refused to accept the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius had great respect for him, and he was loved by everyone for his kindness, responsiveness, constant calmness of soul, and his ability to give consolation to those in every kind of grief.

Archpriest Alexander Philippenko was first arrested and exiled in 1926, at which time almost all members of his family died of hunger. Finding himself in Voronezh in 1927, he joined those who opposed the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. Soon he accepted monasticism and was made an archimandrite. Later he lived illegally in Michurinsk (Kozlov), working as a maker of brick stoves, and served in the Catacomb Church.

Archpriest John Steblin-Kamensky suffered in the Solovki camp from 1924 to 1927. He became a celibate priest after a career as a naval officer. He was arrested again in 1929; his letter to his flock from prison in 1929 has been preserved (Polsky, vol. 2, pp. 191-193), and is a document reminiscent of the epistles of love of the apostolic fathers of the ancient catacomb church.

All the remaining clergy of Voronezh who disagreed with Metropolitan Sergius were arrested in 1930; the monks of the St. Alexis and St. Metrophanes monasteries especially suffered at this time.

The St. Alexis monastery, until its closure after Pascha in 1931, was a center for local and travelling clergy of the old "Tikhonite" Orthodox outlook who opposed Renovationism and then Sergianism. No other church of this outlook remained.

After the closure of the St. Alexis monastery and the annihilation of its clergy, the part of the populace that was faithful to its shepherds and their outlook remained totally without churches and Divine services, not wishing to go to the open Sergianist churches. Secret priests would come rarely and by chance and would celebrate services in homes. Only trusted people of the same outlook knew about this, and they would tell others of like mind about the service. The priest would serve at night and then hide in a storehouse or barn, and when night would come he would leave for somewhere else. During the services the people would sing quietly and watch through the window in case someone should come. If there was a knock, first of all they would hide the priest and then open the door. There were cases when those in charge of the house did not know that there was a service, for they would be performed when they would go away to work. Some participants of the underground Church in Russia who came abroad in 1943 entered a church then for the first time in thirteen years.

For his Epistle Bishop Alexis was placed under suspension by Metropolitan Sergius, and then on February 21, 1930, was arrested by the GPU, dying in prison.

Concerning the latter days of Bishop Alexis' life, we have the memoirs of the recently-reposed Archpriest Sergei Shukin, who thus recalls his encounter with him:

"In the summer of 1936 we were sent by convoy to the Ukhto-Pechersk concentration camp (in the far north). The transfer took almost a whole month, since every two or three days we had a stop at the following point: Kharkov, Orel, Syzran, Vyatka, and Kotlas. In Kotlas the railroad ended and we were conducted further on barges along the Northern Dvina and Vychegda to the harbor of Ust-Vym. From there we were taken on camp trucks to the various camp points.

"At first on this convoy there were no clergymen; it was a mixture of political and criminal exiles. But at each stop our convoy changed — some left, others were added. And at Syzran we were joined by Archbishop Alexis, formerly of Voronezh and Kozlov. He was an old bishop, about 65 years old, tall and of a large build, with an unhealthy color in his face. But the most extraordinary thing was that Vladika was carrying with him two large and heavy suitcases. He could not carry them himself, and therefore he had to have help from others. The other people in the convoy had only a single bundle with dry bread and clothes, so as not to attract the attention of the criminals. But the important thing was that each carried his bundle himself and put it under his head at night.

"It was quite natural that the appearance of Vladika with two suitcases became of immediate interest to the criminals in our cell. My companions and I made the acquaintance of the Archbishop and advised him to be careful, especially at night, when the criminals went hunting for other people's things. But Vladika did not feel well and, shrugging his shoulders, replied: 'What can I do? Let them take them . . . All the same I will sleep at night.' Then we decided that we would take turns at night and watch over Vladika's suitcases . . . The criminals were very dissatisfied with this turn of events and in the morning did not conceal their anger, but God preserved us from trouble. . .

"The same evening we were brought to the station for the further journey. Such transfers the NKVD always arranges at night, so as not to attract the attention of the local inhabitants. My companions carried Vladika's suitcases and we were loaded into one of the compartments of a "Stolypin" wagon. . .

"Under the Tsarist government people in such convoys received hot food twice a day, but under the Soviets they were given only a "dry ration": 400 grams of black bread, 20 grams of sugar, and a piece of herring. Water was given only twice a day, morning and evening. Therefore, receiving in the morning a cup of water and after this some salted fish, those in the convoy were tormented with thirst the whole day.

"The whole way Vladika Alexis lay and dozed. He spoke little and rarely; it was evident that he felt ill, and he ate nothing. Of course, both the wagon and the surroundings acted on him in an oppressive manner. The next day, when we arrived at the station of Kotlas, we were separated from Vladika. Although he was heading for the same Ukhte-Pechersk camp, he was put in a different transfer barracks and we didn't see him again.

"Judging by the physical condition of Vladika Alexis, the camp regimen was beyond his strength. He could not work, and therefore he could expect the worst ration: 300 grams of bread and once a day a watery soup. Even if people could have sent him food parcels, it wouldn't have been right away, until he could let them know his address. Even if he had been sent to the camp hospital, there he would not have received any treatment at all, since there were no medicines whatever. There was no thought given to the diet of prisoners, either; the food was the most crude and monotonous. One has to suppose that Vladika could not survive long in such conditions. Such was the camp system of the NKVD in order to deliver them from those incapable of work. . ."

The influence of Bishop Alexis on the future development of the True-Orthodox or Catacomb Church in Russia was considerable; Soviet researchers make him out to be the founder of a "sect," called the "Buevtsy" ("Bui-ites"). One recent book on underground Orthodoxy in the Soviet Union gives a general summary, taken from Soviet sources, of this movement (which is obviously only the local part of the larger "Josephite" or Catacomb movement) which can be traced for some twenty years after the arrest of Bishop Alexis:*

"Soviet scholarship has, by chance as it were, provided fairly detailed information on one of the branches of the Josephites which provides considerable insight into the nature of the movement. The Buevtsy organization arose in the Tambov area in response to the events of 1927, led by Bishop Aleksii (Bui) of Voronezh, and was affiliated with the larger Josephite movement . . . The movement which was begun by Bishop Aleksii and which became known by his (secular) name, the Buevtsy, formed a part of that congeries of similar movements more or less united under the wing of the Josephite schism. Inasmuch as the Buevtsy movement maintained its identity, however, and exerted an historical influence of its own, it may also be considered separately.

"The Buevtsy movement appeared to be primarily a local movement centered in Voronezh and with its influence concentrated in the surrounding area. According to Soviet research, however, it did have direct links in many other regions as well. Organizationally, the movement appears to have been relatively sophisticated and well founded . . . The size of the movement is difficult to determine, but apparently it was relatively substantial, well able to attract adherents. . . Soviet researchers thirty years later had discovered traces of some forty congregations with a general membership of over 700 belonging to the Buevtsy movement in 1930. In view of the peculiar circumstances necessitated by clandestine Church life, however, it is difficult to imagine that Soviet historical research was able to identify more than a fraction of the adherents of a movement such as this, and these figures may indeed be without much value in estimating the size, strength, and influence of the movement.

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* William C. Fletcher, *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground,* London, Oxford University Press.

"Bui himself was arrested on 21 February 1930, but it would not appear that the arrest of the movement's titular head seriously impeded the progress of the Buevtsy. For the next three years at least, they continued their activity with great vigor, and for the following decade their influence continued to be felt" (pp. 69-71).

"Although its organizational center was in Voronezh, it enjoyed great success in the regions surrounding Tambov, 100 miles to the northeast, and, indeed, was active over a wide area of the Caucasus and the Ukraine. . .

"Apparently there was a fierce attack against the movement, which resulted in the conviction of its leaders and the dissolution of its organizational structure in 1930 or 1931 . . . After this initial attack the movement was reorganized by a subordinate and, again according to Soviet investigators, had a following of some 200 people in 1932. The Soviet academician Mitrokhin states that 'at the end of 1932 the organization of the Buevtsy ended its existence and its most active worker were convicted of anti-Soviet activity,' but goes on to state that its adherents, despite the alleged destruction of the movement's organization, conducted anti-Soviet agitation during the election campaign in 1939. . .

"During the collectivization campaign, the Buevtsy, like cognate movements throughout the country, conducted vigorous agitation against the *Kolkhozes* (collective farms) . . . Because the number of churches which the Buevtsy could utilize was far from adequate, a cult of informal shrines sprang up, thus giving the movement the advantage of locales which could attract people from numerous villages without the disadvantages of a fixed location, such as a normal church, which would be more susceptible to police pressure . . . Eschatology played a considerable role in the doctrine of the Buevtsy. Subsequent Soviet scholarship suggests that this eschatological motif was intertwined with definite aspirations towards engineering a restoration of the monarchy" (pp. 107-109).

Later, "the Buevtsy organization embraced a number of people who subsequently became leaders of the True Orthodox Church, and even after this movement had been liquidated as an organization, these members continued their underground Orthodox activity throughout the decade of the thirties." Further, according to the Soviet source (Mitrokhin) utilized by this book, "this very organization (Buevtsy) served both in idea and in its organizational relationship as the starting point for the followers of the True Orthodox Church in 1946-1952. Among the workers of the True Orthodox Church at this time we continually meet either active Buevtsy or people who at one time had been connected with them" (pp. 181-182).

Thus, Soviet sources themselves confirm the continuity of the courageous stand of Bishop Alexis in 1927 with the later True Orthodox Church which, as we know from many other sources, continues to the present day, just as persecuted and hidden as ever.

III

THE EPISTLE OF BISHOP ALEXIS BUI OF VORONEZH

Greater joy have I none than this, to hear my children walking in the truth (III John 1:4).

STANDING ON GUARD for Orthodoxy and vigilantly following all manifestations of church life not only in the diocese entrusted to our humility, but in general in the Whole Patriarchate, to our great distress we have discovered in the latest actions of Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhegorod, who has returned to his duties as Substitute of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, a rapid descent towards renovationism, an exceeding of the rights and authority reserved for him, and a violation of the holy canons (resolution of questions of principle independently, transfer and removal of bishops without trial or investigation, etc.; see Canonical Epistle of St. Cyril, Apostolic Canon 34).

By his actions against the spirit of Orthodoxy, Metropolitan Sergius has torn himself away from unity with the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church and has forfeited the right of presidency in the Russian Church.

The Orthodox hierarchs and pastors have attempted in every way to influence Metropolitan Sergius and return him to the straight and true path, but they have not succeeded.

Being zealous for the glory of God and desiring to place a limit to the further infringement by Metropolitan Sergius of the wholeness and inviolability of the Holy Canons and decrees of ecclesiastical order, and to preserve unimpaired canonical communion with their lawful head, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, Patriarchal Locum Tenens, — the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joseph and the Orthodox archpastors one in mind with him have condemned the actions of Sergius and deprived him of communion with themselves.

Being by God's will and with the blessing of the Substitute of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich, invested on February 16/29, 1927, with the high authority of being the guardian of the Church of Voronezh, remaining at the same time also Bishop of the Kozlov disrict, and entirely sharing the opinion and outlook of the faithful Orthodox hierarchs and their flock, from this time forth I separate myself from Metropolitan Sergius, his uncanonical Synod and their actions, preserving canonical succession through the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa.

I have chosen the Most Reverend Joseph (Metropolitan of Petrograd), assigned by the Patriarchal Locum Tenens Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, on December 6, 1925, as third candidate to the post of Substitute of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, as my highest spiritual guide.

I entreat the Lord "that He preserve our land in peace," that He confirm and keep His Holy Church from unbelief, heresies, and schism, and grant us zeal and courage to walk without reproach in His statutes."

Administering the Diocese of Voronezh,
Bishop Alexis of Kozlov

(Seal) January 9/22, 1928
St. Philip,
Metropolitan of Moscow
Voronezh.

IV

BLESSED THEOKTISTA THE FOOL FOR CHRIST

Commemorated Feb. 22 (†1936)

At the time when Archbishop Peter and Bishop Alexis were in Voronezh, a remarkable holy woman lived there, a fool for Christ, the blessed Theoktista Michaelovna.

The following two accounts come from two former residents of Voronezh, who personally knew the blessed one. The first, Archimandrite Mitrophan of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk church in San Francisco, spiritual son of the late wonderworker Archbishop John Maximovitch, told us the following:

It is difficult for a man to drive pride away from himself, to kill it. Human nature does not endure accusations and will always try to defend itself, to answer the accusation, even if it is correct. But the path of fools for Christ is a special one, the straightest one to God. They delight in hurting their pride. Theoktista Michaelovna deliberately drew persecutions on herself; many mocked her, hated her, and even beat her.

Who she was or where she came from—no one knew. It was said that she had been the wife of a high-ranking naval officer who died in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), and that after this tragedy, becoming disillusioned in the solidity of earthly life, she directed the gaze of her heart on high and took upon herself the exploit of foolishness for the sake of Christ. God rewarded her with a gift of clairvoyance with which she helped her suffering neighbors.

She was small of stature, skinny, worn out, with noble features in her face. She lived in the Voronezh Monastery of St. Alexis until it was closed (1931), and then took shelter with various people. She had literally "nowhere to lay her head." She lived from time to time also in Novocherkassk, where she was very respected. It is said that she was received there by the Ataman (General) of the Don Cossacks; despite the armed guard around his house, she went everywhere freely, even to his private rooms. It was not for nothing that she was comforting people in Novocherkassk, for there were frightful catastrophes there; the town was almost entirely wiped out by the communists because the Cossacks had been a great support for the Tsarist government and were suspected to be a threat due to their freedom-loving spirit. Both in Voronezh and Novocherkassk she had her own circle of people whom she would visit.

I knew her from my childhood. I remember how one time my mother brought me to the Monastery to visit her. We had tea in her quarters, and she herself waited on me and poured tea.

In Voronezh there was an outstanding pastor, Archpriest Mitrofan, who greatly respected her and received her with great honor. He also died as a martyr in 1931.

She had a special appearance. She would wear soldier's boots of the largest possible size, always leaving the laces untied. She would walk intentionally through puddles; the boots would become filled with water and she would keep right on walking.

She had a cane—a stick with a top on it, just a dry branch, and she would always take this stick with her. But always her noble, aristocratic origin was apparent. She would walk and be swearing a blue streak—but at the same time she would be looking with the kindest eyes. While walking she would close windows along the street with the stick. She was a noisy one. She loved me very much and often visited me.

Theokrista Michaelovna's most striking gift was that of clairvoyance, which she manifested in her last years with special clarity. Here are some cases which I personally witnessed.

1. It was already the frightful Soviet times, the 1920's. My father was a priest and I was afraid for him. After a long separation from him, I somehow managed to come and stay with him. I greatly rejoiced at meeting my relatives again. One morning Theokrista Michaelovna sent the woman who served her to demand that I leave my father immediately and come to her. I did not want to do this at all, since the times were dangerous and I had come for a short time.

She went away and after some time came back with the same command from Theokrista Michaelovna. This happened three times at short intervals, until I finally went. I was thinking: "What can be so urgent?" But she was just sitting by the samovar and, in the calmest way, just as if nothing had happened, she poured some tea and offered refreshments, and conducted a quiet conversation on the weather, and inquired how I was getting along. I had to humble myself and submit.

In an hour my mother came in tears: it turned out that no sooner had I obeyed and gone to Theokrista Michaelovna than our house had been surrounded and after a thorough search my father had been arrested. Despite all attempts, I was never able to find out anything more about his fate. If I had been home they would have taken me too—Theoktista Michaelovna's clairvoyance saved my life. Then she took on a totally different air and advised me to leave the city as quickly as possible.

2. The next incident concerns the death of my mother. I loved my mother very much and suffered terribly when she died. I was always repulsed by alcoholic beverages and never had any desire for them. But when I heard that my mother had died, in my grief I was so outraged at all the inhuman conditions of the Soviet daily struggle that surrounded me that out of despair I couldn't endure it any longer, and I went out and got drunk—so badly that I barely managed to get home to my apartment. Theoktista Michaelovna had a certain chaste woman of high education who devoted her whole life to the blessed one; she was called Anna Vasilievna. And so I wrote a letter to this Anna Vasilievna about my great sorrow over my mother's death, and asked that she inform Theoktista Michaelovna that my mother had died. And soon I received a letter from Anna Vasilievna where it was written: "Theoktista Michaelovna asks me to tell you that she cannot stand drunkards." And so, in her clairvoyance, she had seen what I was doing.

3. I was working in Orel, where I had a temporary out-of-town job. When it was discovered that I was the son of a priest, they kept back my pay; this continued for several months. I had no money, and my family was very concerned over what I should do next.

I wrote a letter to Anna Vasilievna for Theoktista Michaelovna. In a few days I received a reply: "Theoktista Michaelovna asks that you be told that she has made arrangements for you to be paid." At this time I was in the town of Eletz.

I regained hope and went to the telephone station to call the pay office in Orel and to find out what the situation was with regard to my payment. And they said: "Where are you? We have been searching for you to pay you." And I received everything in full, as I never had before. And so dear Theoktista Michaelovna had indeed "made arrangements."

4. Once I was walking with Theoktista Michaelovna on the street, and a well-dressed young woman, full of health, was coming towards us. Evidently something had been revealed about her to Theoktista Michaelovna, because all of a sudden she hit the woman on the back with all her might, and then added a strong, uncensored word, apparently corresponding to her secret vice. The woman froze on the spot, but then continued on her way, since she apparently knew what she was being punished for.

Anna Vasilievna related that Theoktista Michaelovna did not sleep nights, but would spend them in prayer and vigil. When she went visiting she would pretend to pick insects off herself and kill them, and all the time she would scratch. Of course, people judged her for this. When she was with outsiders, she would often begin to speak all manner of nonsense, and sometimes would spit with an oath. But as soon as the outsiders would leave, a coherent conversation of a clairvoyant eldress would begin. She had a remarkable mind and a refined way of expressing her thoughts and feelings. It was apparent she was well bred.

There was a great public square in Voronezh; on one side of it were the buildings of the Party's Regional Committee, and the Regional Executive Committee, and here there were monuments to Lenin and Stalin. Chekist guards were standing everywhere. Once she went up to these monuments and in front of everyone relieved herself; a puddle formed. She was immediately taken to Cheka headquarters, and there, in the Chief's office, she made an even bigger mess right on his desk with all its papers. She was detained and then released as abnormal.

She had a friend Anisia, who very much loved her. Once this Anisia became ill and was preparing to die, since no one could help her. Theoktista Michaelovna came to her and was told that Anisia was dying. "She's pretending," replied Theoktista Michaelovna, then went up to her, took her by the hand (and it was evident that she was really dying) and said: "Aniska, get up!" The latter instantly got up and began to prepare a meal for them, and all her disease was finished. This was in Voronezh.

A certain woman was subjected to a search by the police. She had a small store of money which she had hidden in a purse on a shelf. Suddenly the police came and the search began. Mentally she cried out for help: "Theoktista Michaelovna, save me!" The one conducting the search touched the purse but saw nothing. He moved the whole buffet and all the shelves, but didn't find the money.

Another testimony of Theoktista Michaelovna is given by a spiritual daughter of Archbishop Peter (Zverev) in Voronezh in the 1920's; she is now a nun residing in a California convent, Mother X.

BISHOP ALEXIS

I see her, the blessed Theoktista Michaelovna, before my eyes as if it were yesterday, although such a long time has passed since I saw her last in the city of Voronezh. She was of short stature, dressed in a long skirt and a coat of some dark, ugly color; on her head were many heavy kerchiefs, as though there were something wrong with her, or she were sick. She didn't walk on the sidewalk, but mostly right on the street. She was always accompanied by some woman, perhaps a nun or a novice from the Protection Convent of the Mother of God where the blessed Theoktista lived amidst the remaining sisters who had not yet been arrested and banished into exile. The Convent had been closed by the Soviets long before, and had been turned into a so-called "workers' village," its houses rented out to laymen.

Theoktista Michaelovna lived in one of the cells of the Convent. Since laymen lived there now, and the school children were indoctrinated with communist propaganda, the blessed one was often seen being followed by a band of boys—young hoodlums. Usually she would disregard them, but sometimes she would stop, turn to them and say something to them. We saw her from afar, for to come close to her was a bit risky, since she was known to all to be just crazy. There were families which she visited, and perhaps she would stay sometimes with some of them. She was known to all the older residents as a holy woman and was highly respected.

When Bishop Peter of Voronezh was arrested by the GPU on November 10/23, 1925, his flock suffered bitterly over the separation from him and appealed to blessed Theoktista. "Will Vladika return soon?" they asked; "when will Vladika come?" She replied: "He will come when we're eating meat." And in fact, her words were fulfilled precisely; the GPU did not detain him long, and he returned home, arriving in Voronezh in time for the funeral of Metropolitan Vladimir of Voronezh on December 28, during the fast-free week after the feast of the Nativity of Christ.

On February 2, 1926, Bishop Peter was raised to the rank of Archbishop of Voronezh, and he began to live then in a small house not far from the St. Alexis Monastery. Here Theoktista Michaelovna constantly visited him—evidently, he was a friend of the blessed one. She would go straight to his cell and sit on his bed, where she would wait until Vladika would send away those who were constantly coming to him. She would call Vladika always by his first name and patronymic.

I also remember that in the upper church of the St. Alexis Monastery, dedicated to the Resurrection of Christ, there were two wonderworking icons of the Mother of God: the "Life-giving Fount" on a high place on the right side, to which little steps led with a metal railing, and at the same elevation on the left side, the Mother of God "of Three Hands." One day everyone in the church was very upset at the behavior of Theokrista Michaelovna: she got up on the high place to the icon of the "Three Hands" and stood with her back to the icon and began to bawl somebody out with some rather crude language. A short time later some thieves broke into the sacristy, sawed through the iron grating in the window, and stole something valuable. Then people understood that this act of hers referred to those evil-doers.

It was said that if she gave you bread, it was a good sign. People tell how once she was drinking tea at the place of one of the sisters in the Convent, when suddenly she leapt up and poured water from a dish out the window into the yard; at this very time someone nearby had a fire in a chimney and Theokrista Michaelovna was "putting out the fire" by this gesture.

Once she refused to take a bread-roll from one woman, saying "You will need it yourself; you will live for so-many days (she gave the number) without anything else—you will have nothing else to eat." This happened just as she said.

The righteous Theokrista saw the rapid liquidation of the Orthodox churches and monuments of Voronezh in the 1930's, which was only a part of the satanic program that was conducted all over the much-suffering Russian land, to the appalled outrage of almost the whole Russian people. The reign of terror took such proportions that people thought some madmen had gotten loose and seized the reins of government. Thousands of people were being arrested at random and thrown into prisons without any idea why. Professor P. Kusakov of South America, then a young man, who still remembers the blessed Theokrista well, tells us that it was like a psychotic nightmare, after which people became stupified and indifferent to everything. Those few who remained free had only one thought: how to survive and take care of their shattered close ones. In addition to all this, a man-made famine was raging all over the southern region, which had always been the most fertile part of Russia, when thousands of innocent people died from starvation.

All this the blessed Theoktista saw well and co-suffered with the remaining Christians. By the mid-1930's all churches were closed, levelled by dynamite or turned into factory storehouses. Christianity went deep underground and the few faithful could steal away to church services only deep in the night. The heart of the blessed one, which inspired so many good deeds for her neighbors, could not endure any longer. One day blood rushed to her throat, and on February 22, 1936 (O.S.), Theoktista Michaelovna died. It was said that before her death she dressed all in white to meet her Bridegroom, Christ, and died in the Convent. She was buried in the cemetery outside the city and her memory was erased from Voronezh. But the Christian conscience bears her image in loving hearts throughout the world, wherever there is knowledge and understanding of Russia's Catacomb Saints.

***Sources:* Polsky's *Russia's New Martyrs*, Vol. II: Memoires of Rev. Sergei Shukin, Archimandrite Mitrofan, Nun Xenia, and Peter Kusakov.**

12

Archbishop Pachomius of Chernigov

HIS BROTHER, ARCHBISHOP ABERCIUS, AND THEIR EPISTLE

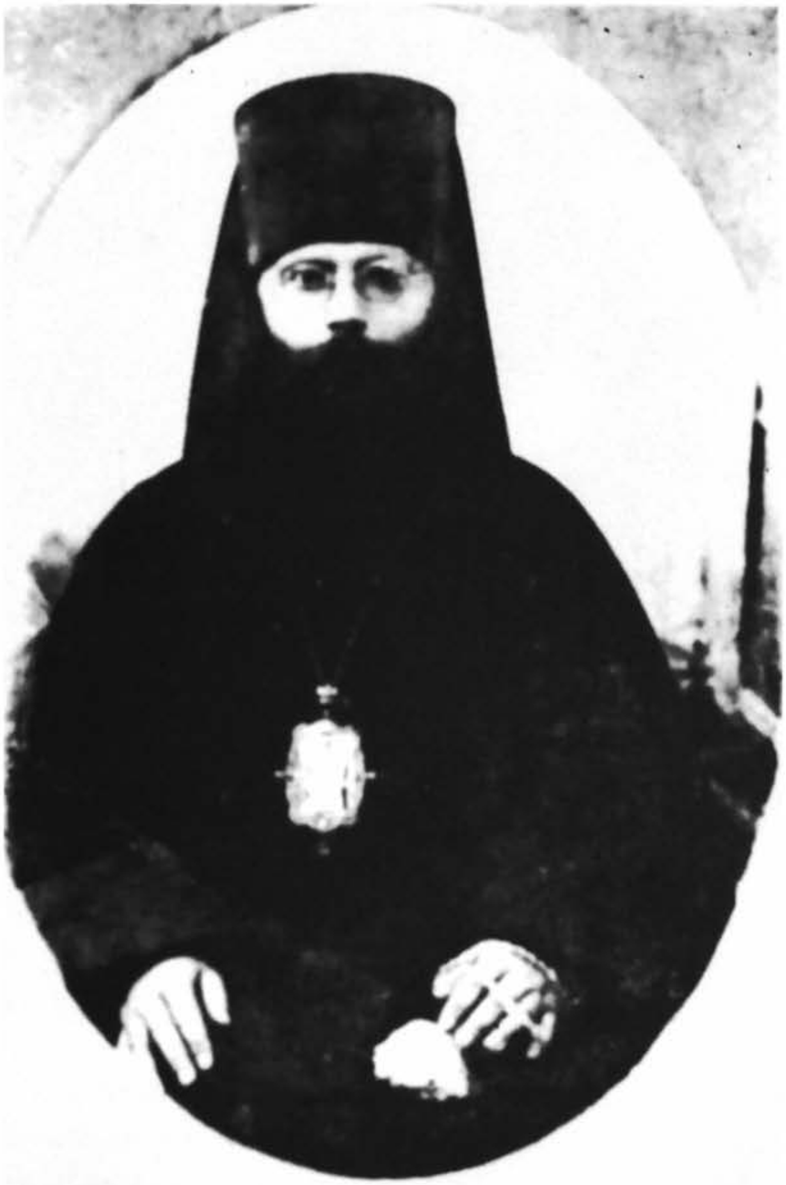
Commemorated May 15 (†1938)

> *He who has acquired love, tastes Christ every day*
> *and every hour and becomes immortal by it.*
> *Love is much sweeter than life. He who has*
> *acquired love becomes clothed in God.*
> St. Isaac the Syrian

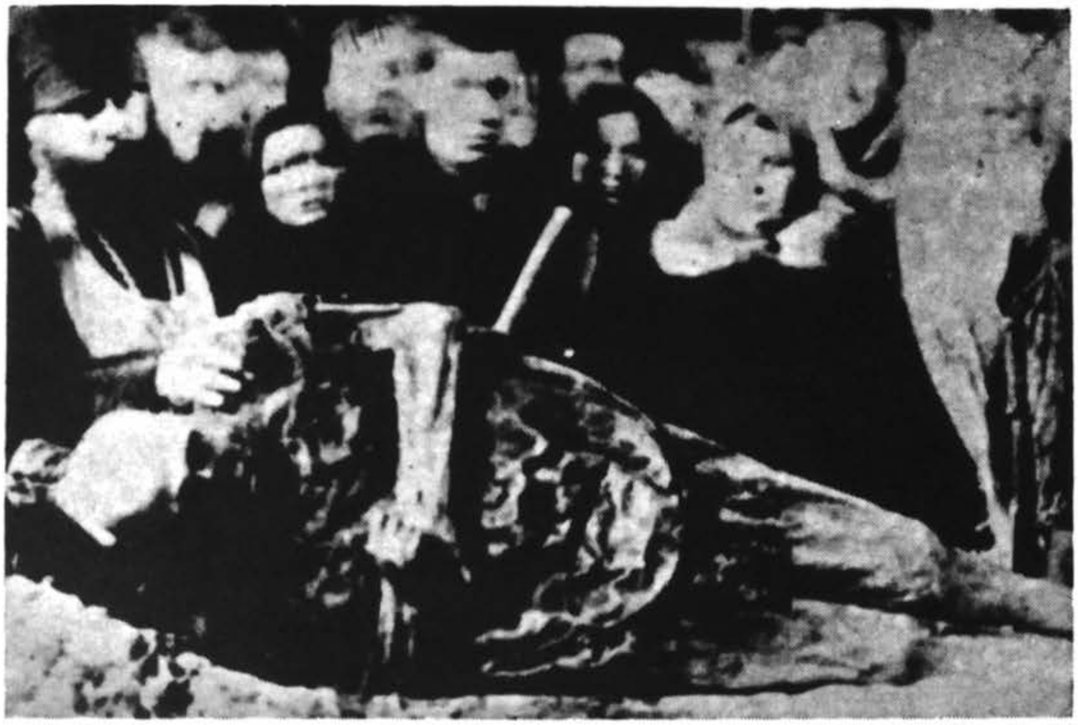
THERE WERE THREE brother-bishops in the Kedrov family, natives of the Viatka region. The father, Peter Kedrov, was a church psalm-reader and gave his sons a good church unbringing and theological education.

The oldest son, Peter, the future hierarch-confessor Pachomius of Chernigov, was born exactly 100 years ago, in 1877. He was serious, humble and meek by nature, pensive and church-oriented as he was growing up. Having completed preparatory theological schooling, he entered the Kazan Theological Academy at the time when its rector was Anthony Khrapovitsky, the future Metropolitan and first Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside of Russia.

The school spirit at that time was exceedingly fervent; it was truly one spiritual family, or rather a little army of monastically-minded students, and its heart was the young rector-bishop. With unpretentious love he inspired his disciples with an unquenchable thirst for applying Orthodox truth to life, and this at a time when revolutionary ideas were making headway in the thoroughly Orthodox Holy Russia. The students were thoroughly prepared, knowing well the spirit of the times, and were aflame to go into the world and teach the gospel of truth. The Academy's church services, performed according to the Typicon, in which all took part, were a living fount of inspiration for the students. Young Peter's part was the office of candlelighter, which he fulfilled with the profound seriousness so characterisic of him.



Archbishop Pachomius of Chernigov



Archbishop Pachomius of Chernigov holding the actual relics of
St. Theodosius of Chernigov when the Soviets were "investigating" them.

Being a little too zealous in his religiousness, Peter decided to fulfill literally the Lord's commandment: *If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee* (Matt. 5:29), and one night he attempted to burn out his right eye with a candle. His roommate at this time was Basil Maximenko, the future Archbishop Vitaly of Jordanville. He was awakened in the middle of the night by the grinding of teeth of his roommate, who was trying in this way to endure the pain. Seeing what had happened, he put up a cry and saved his comrade's eye. However, the burns were so serious that it required surgery on the eyelid and eyebrow, and the scar remained for the rest of his life.

In 1898 Peter graduated from the Academy, and Metropolitan Anthony tonsured him a monk, naming him Pachomius; upon his transfer to the diocese of Volhynia, Metropolitan Anthony took the young hieromonk with him, and here the latter did missionary work residing in the Derman Monastery near St. Job's Pochaev Lavra. In 1911 he was consecrated bishop of Novgorod-Seversky, a vicar of Chernigov, and soon he was elevated to the see of the ancient Diocese of Chernigov itself, renowned for the holy relics of St. Theodosius, Bishop of Chernigov, who had been canonized in 1896. During the Revolution he took part in the council of 1917-18 and on October 30, 1917, delivered a report concerning the procedure of electing the patriarch; in this report he reflected the opinion of his preceptor, Metropolitan Anthony, whom he not only dearly loved, but whose pastoral zeal became engraved in his heart as well.

This pastoral awareness stayed with him his whole life. This is clearly seen in his Epistle against the "legalization" of 1927 as well as in his pastoral activity in the period after the Russian Civil War. When the White Army with his beloved Metropolitan Anthony retreated and the Red Army took full control of Russia, the country was in total collapse, with transportation paralyzed, but this did not stop the good shepherd. With his archpastor's staff, Archbishop Pachomius visited all the churches in his diocese *on foot*! Since the left bank of the Dniepr River, according to the new administrative division, belonged to the Chernigov diocese, he also had to visit the outskirts of Kiev, and thus he visited the Kiev Caves Lavra also.

While Archbishop of Chernigov, he was also the abbot of a local monastery where he resided. The city of Chernigov was still living the life of Holy Russia at this time and righteous men and woman roamed its streets; one of these was the fool-for-Christ's-sake, Michael the Blessed.

In the world the righteous Michael was a highly respected civil engineer. Once he was commissioned to build a large bridge. The bridge was constructed according to his specifications. One day this bridge collapsed killing several people. So profoundly was the engineer struck by the news of this tragedy, that he took off his expensive business suit and, putting on a long shirt, he left his home never to return. He became a fool-for-Christ's-sake. He ate very little, had almost no place to sleep, knelt whole nights in prayer, and spoke very little, saying only—''Repent.'' The blessed Michael achieved great sanctity and frequently visited Archbishop Pachomius. When he died in 1922, the whole city lamented his righteous death and took part in the burial performed by Archbishop Pachomius with bitter tears in his eyes. The mysteries revealed through this holy fool-for-Christ about the future of Russia and the whole world were undoubtedly shared with Archbishop Pachomius, for the latter was of kindred spirit and able to understand and hold the mysteries of God in his heart.

The same year the Communist authorities made many attempts to arrest Archbishop Pachomius. One day they stormed into the cathedral while the Divine Liturgy was being celebrated in order to arrest him on the spot. The crowd of believers, however, thronged straight to the altar and prevented for a time the arrest of their beloved Archpastor. But the G.P.U. was not easily dissuaded from abandoning its vicious scheme. The Archbishop had a habit of remaining in the altar a long time after the service and this day, when only he and his cell-attendant remained, the G.P.U. agents burst into the sanctuary and captured their holy victim. Thus was Archbishop Pachomius arrested. He was released only to be arrested over and over again. All these arrests seemed to him to be a ceaseless sequence of nightmares which finally began to undermine his peace of soul.

About the same time, the Communist authorities throughout the whole of Russia began a blasphemous "investigation" of holy relics, opening the shrines of many saints with an attempt to prove "scientifically" to the public the assumed falsity of the saints' incorruptibility. This movement produced frightful spectacles of sacrilege, evoking enormous protests and resistance by the people, many of whom suffered imprisonment and banishment. But the "scientific investigators" were themselves put to shame, for they themselves had to admit the incorruptibility of the relics, which they could not explain scientifically, and this was printed in all the newspapers. The believing Orthodox rejoiced at the outcome, but the authorities nevertheless did their work — they placed the saints' relics in anti-religious museums as "mummies." This campaign caused some conscientious bishops even to die out of desperate sorrow at the mockery of the saints, as happened with Archbishop Anatole of Irkutsk.

ARCHBISHOP PACHOMIUS

Archbishop Pachomius too had to suffer in this campaign. The relics of St. Theodosius were required to be stripped and exposed to the public. Usually the atheistic commission of "scientists" would shake and toss the relics, but Archbishop Pachomius stood his ground and, having put on epitrachelion and cuffs, did the unwrapping of the relics himself, shedding painful tears in the presence of a large crowd of believers, who wept and sobbed, seeing that the Communists would not leave even the dead alone. The late Archbishop Leonty of Chile, a close friend of Archbishop Pachomius, has preserved for us a rare photograph of the opening of the relics of St. Theodosius of Chernigov, showing the grieving Archbishop Pachomius holding the relics, surrounded by his grief-stricken flock. After this the relics were confiscated, brought to Petrograd and exposed in an anti-religious museum together with dead rats and fossilized bones. But the believers, having bribed the guards, secretly served catacomb services before the relics in the middle of the night. Evidently in connection with this Archbishop Pachomius was arrested.

Afer his release in 1923 he could not return to his diocese but found shelter in the St. Daniel Monastery of Moscow, whose abbot was the last rector of the Moscow Theological Academy, Archbishop Theodore (Pozdeyev), who still managed somehow to keep the school going. Archbishop Theodore gave shelter to many banished bishops; at times there were as many as ten bishops living in the monastery, which after 1927 became a center of the anti-Sergian clergy. Archbishop Theodore was in opposition even to Patriarch Tikhon over what he considered the latter's too close contact with the Communist government. In this monastery the Novice Basil, the future Archbishop Leonty of Chile, met Archbishop Pachomius and saw him taking part in a council with Patriarch Tikhon. He even received a letter from Archbishop Pachomius (which has been preserved) in which the confessor, giving his blessing, says that he doubts "that the Lord will make us meet again."

Archbishop Pachomius' younger brother Procopius, also a theologian, before becoming a monk was teaching New Testament in the Vilna Theological Seminary. Becoming tonsured with the name Abercius, he was soon made bishop of Zhitomir and resided in the Theophany Monastery there. He was well received by his flock there. He was young, with blond wavy hair, very pious, energetic, friendly, and looked full of life and health. He was strong in faith, kind, accessible, and was greatly loved by all. He always gave sermons. He served with great solemnity, and liked to make processions over long distances, visiting towns and villages, singing all the way with all the people, giving sermons in which he openly indicated the path by which Christians should go in those perilous times for faith. Soon, however, the processions were forbidden. He also loved all-night vigils, ending at dawn, and had them often, gathering many people for them. Then he was arrested, broken down, then released, only to be arrested again after his co-authorship with his brother of the Epistle against the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, afer which he was never heard of again.

In 1927 the infamous Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius with its "legalization" of the Church (under Soviet terms) gave the final blow to Orthodox believers, who had only rejoiced as long as the persecutions came from outside but did not take hold of the Church's heart. Archbishop Pachomius was one of the first to protest, writing, together with his brother Archbishop Abercius, the important document printed below, which was addressed not directly to Metropolitan Sergius but to the faithful in general. It gives a thorough picture of the church conditions which resulted after the Declaration.

Shortly after writing this Epistle, Archbishop Pachomius was arrested and sent first to Solovki, then in 1931 to the slave-labor camp at Mai-Guba that was building the Baltic-White Sea Canal. Prof. Nesterov, who was there at this time, relates that Archbishop Pachomius arrived there almost an invalid, with paralysis of the facial nerves. Because of his physical weakness he could not be used in the building and was therefore sent in 1932 to a camp for invalids at Kuzema; but even here he was sent out to physical labor which was very difficult for him: carrying water, baking bread, etc.

Prof. Nesterov relates an incident from this period which is very characteristic of the Archbishop. One of the imprisoned professors was working in the office of the Kuzema camp as a scribe. He had to compile a list in quick order of those who had been sent to a different work point in the Kuzema camp and had to work all night. The professor was tormented and irritable. In the morning Archbishop Pachomius came into the office and asked the professor whether he knew where and when they were being sent. The professor replied sharply: "You bother me, Vladika!" and added a crude comment. Archbishop Pachomius humbly bowed down to his feet, asking forgiveness for irritating him by his question. The professor became upset and in his turn asked forgiveness of the Archbishop for his crudeness.

In personal conversations with Prof. Nesterov, Archbishop Pachomius often condemned the policy of Metropolitan Sergius more sharply and categorically than in his Epistle. At this time the results of Metropolitan Sergius' policy had become clear, both with regard to the fate of the Church itself in general, and with regard to the banished bishops in particular. In place of the promised legalization, the liquidation of churches and clergy was proceeding at an increasing tempo. Bishops and priests languished in prison without any hope of liberation. Exiles and arrests not only did not cease, but even increased.

Archbishop Pachomius recognized as head of the Church not Metropolitan Sergius, but Metropolitan Cyril, as was logical according to the instructions of Patriarch Tikhon. And when a kind of Church was formed at the places of imprisonment, where an immense number of bishops, priests and believers were to be found, Archbishop Pachomius recognized as the head of this Church Metropolitan Seraphim (Samoilovich) of Uglich, who at that time was imprisoned and working as a scribe at the women's concentration camp at Mai-Guba.

In the absence of Ar Pachomius, all churches of the Chernigov diocese commemorated Metropolitan Sergius until 1930, and those who followed their archpastor in refusing to accept the "legalization" had to go to Kiev, to the community of Abbess Sophia, to receive the Holy Mysteries.

The brother-bishops had another brother, Michael, who between the two wars was a theology teacher in Poland at the Kremenetz and Vilna Seminaries. After the Second World War he became a monk and was consecrated bishop of Vraclaw, where he soon died.

The brother-bishops, Pachomius and Abercius, as their document clearly reveals, belong to the ranks of the confessors of the true Orthodox Church of Russia in the 20th century. Their epistle, while moderate in tone and even discouraging an immediate break in communion with Metropolitan Sergius (a break which they found it later necessary to make), is so precise in its diagnosis of the mistakes of the new church policy of Metropolitan Sergius that it seems contemporary with our own day, fifty years later, when the results of these mistakes are glaringly evident to everyone. Above all, as with all the founding fathers of the Catacomb Church in Russia, the emphasis of the Epistle is on the *spiritual freedom* without which the Church can become merely another instrument of worldly powers.

The Epistle is not found in the usual printed and manuscript sources of this period, but was preserved by E. N. Lopeshanskaya, the secretary of Archbishop Pachomius' vicar, Bishop Damascene of Glukhov, another ardent opponent of the Declaration. She devoted her whole life to the preservation of Bishop Damascene's works and significance, and shortly before her death in San Francisco in 1972 was able to print this Epistle together with other materials on the "Bishop-Confessors" who opposed Metropolitan Sergius.

THE EPISTLE OF THE BROTHER BISHOPS ARCHBISHOP PACHOMIUS OF CHERNIGOV AND ARCHBISHOP ABERCIUS OF ZHITOMIR

Document of Late 1927

IT WOULD SEEM that up until this time we have not been able to come to terms with the government, and we do not enjoy the rights which are supposedly provided by the laws of the Soviet Republic to every religion; and this is not at all because our Church is counter-revolutionary. Our archpastors and church laymen, who are languishing in the bonds of banishment and bitter labors, have not at all occupied themselves with any kind of anti-government activity. This is now evident to everyone. The true reason for the grievous manifestations is to be found in the fundamental divergence of our basic religious views on God's world and human life, on the aims and purposes of our earthly existence, with the Communist views which are placed by the Soviet government as the foundation of the life of its citizens: that which for us is holy and an indisputable truth, for the atheists is opium, superstition, deception, charlatanry, and perhaps even counter-revolution — for example, the idea of the Patriarchate, holy icons, holy relics, our holy Mysteries, and our Divine services, and the very faith in Christ crucified. Thus, there is again confirmed for the whole world the eternal truth of the words of the great Apostle Paul, *The word of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but for us who are being saved it is the power of God. We preach Christ crucified: unto the Jews a stumbling-block, unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God* (I Cor. 1:18, 23-24). *We preach wisdom among them that are perfect: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought. But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, hidden,* which none of the rulers of this world have understood (I Cor. 2:6-8). Their minds have been blinded by the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4); *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged* (I Cor. 2:14).

Thus, there can be no union between Church and State, when it has to do with our Orthodox Church and the Soviet Union, by reason of the fundamental difference in the basic views of one and the other side. There is possible only a conditional agreement as to practical mutual relationships, solely on the foundation of the principle of the separation of Church and State.

In actual fact, can one even conceive the Soviet State in union with the Church? A State religion in an anti-religious State! A government Church in an atheist government! This is an absurdity; it contradicts the nature of the Church and the Soviet State; this is inacceptable both for a sincerely religious person and for an honest atheist.

However, they are trying to bring this absurdity into realization before our eyes. Our present leaders of church life, having a limited horizon, have begun to conduct a "new course of church policy." But this new path wanders off into the old paths and comes down to the attempt to organize a State Church as it was in the Russian Empire.

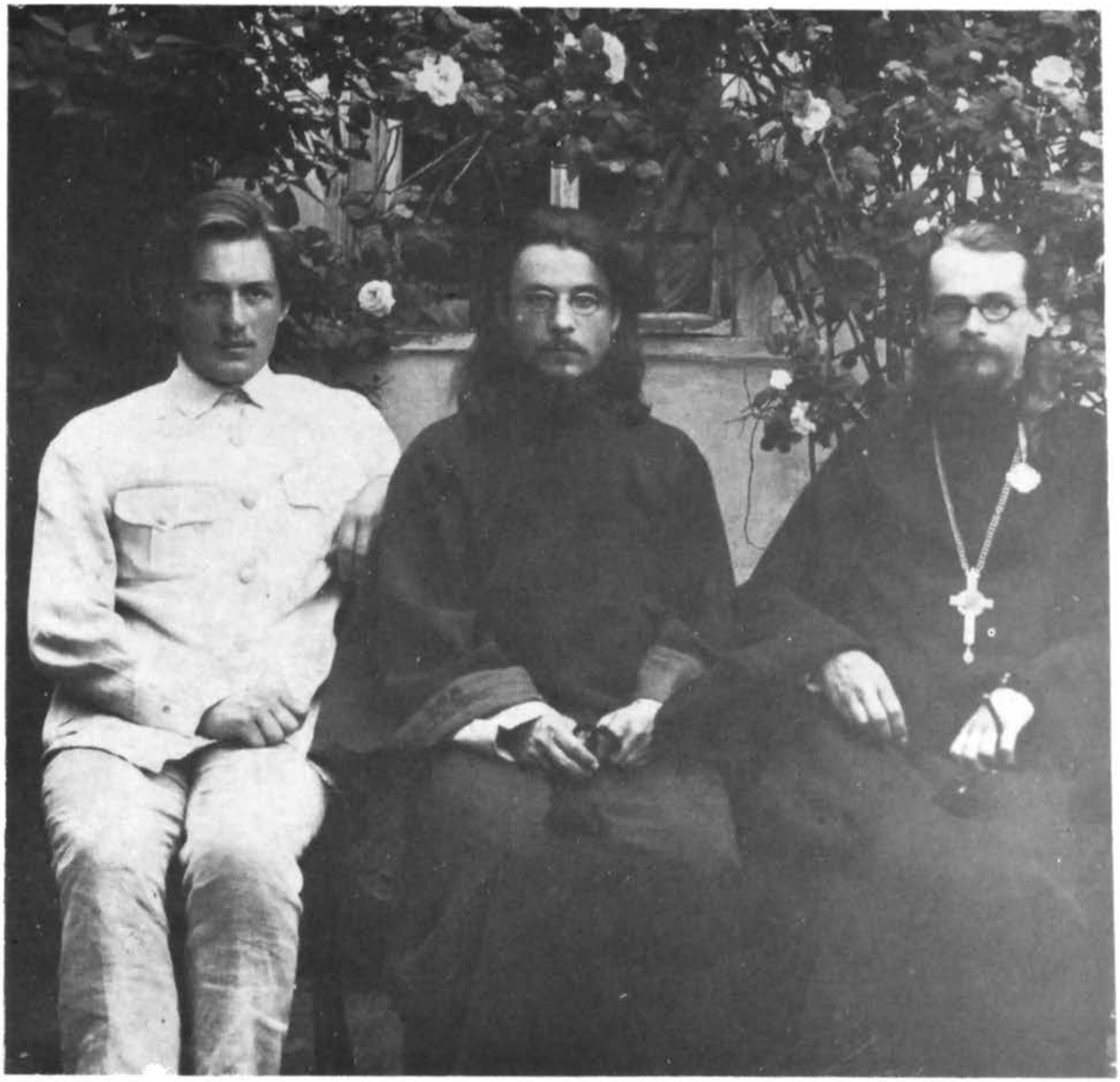
Already in the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod, which was published with a mocking and blasphemous preface in *Izvestia* on August 19, 1927, among other unfortunate assertions and expressions there was allowed something that testifies to the erasing by the authors of this most grievous document of the boundary between Church and State. How is it possible for a sincere person to declare without qualification that the joys and sorrows of the Soviet Union, as our native land, are the same for the Orthodox Church? The Soviet Union is a State, and such an identity of joys and sorrows the Holy Church cannot have with any government, and all the more with one that does not even conceal the fact that it would desire to liquidate every religion in general. Being drawn into church politics, our leaders have forgotten the exhortation of the holy Apostle, *Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness and iniquity? Or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?* (II Cor. 6:14-15.)

If the majority of archpastors, pastors, and laymen, reading these and similar expressions in the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, have not hastened to protest, it is out of fear lest a premature announcement call forth a division in the Church, and as a result of a hope that, in their activity, Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod will correct the mistakes which they have allowed on paper. But, alas, reality has not justified our hopes. One must keep in mind that in general, when there is a union of the Church with a State having at its disposal outward power and all means of purely physical activity, then at the slightest violation of the ideally just mutual relations, the suffering side will always be the Church; even the freedom of its inward life is easily violated in view of the usual striving of the State to turn the Church administrative institutions into the organs of its own government. All the more, an anti-religious State which is unfriendly toward the Church, for which State certain of the unquestioned foundations of the inward life of the Church and its moral authority are superstitions, undeserving of any attention — such a State, of course, will not stand on ceremony. It will use the church apparatus (a servile Synod, accomodating leaders) for its political aims (which are not at all for the benefit of holy faith), and it will place the Church in a degrading position. The principle of the spiritual freedom of the Church and the non-interference of the Church in politics will immediately be violated by such a State — something we have already seen in actuality.

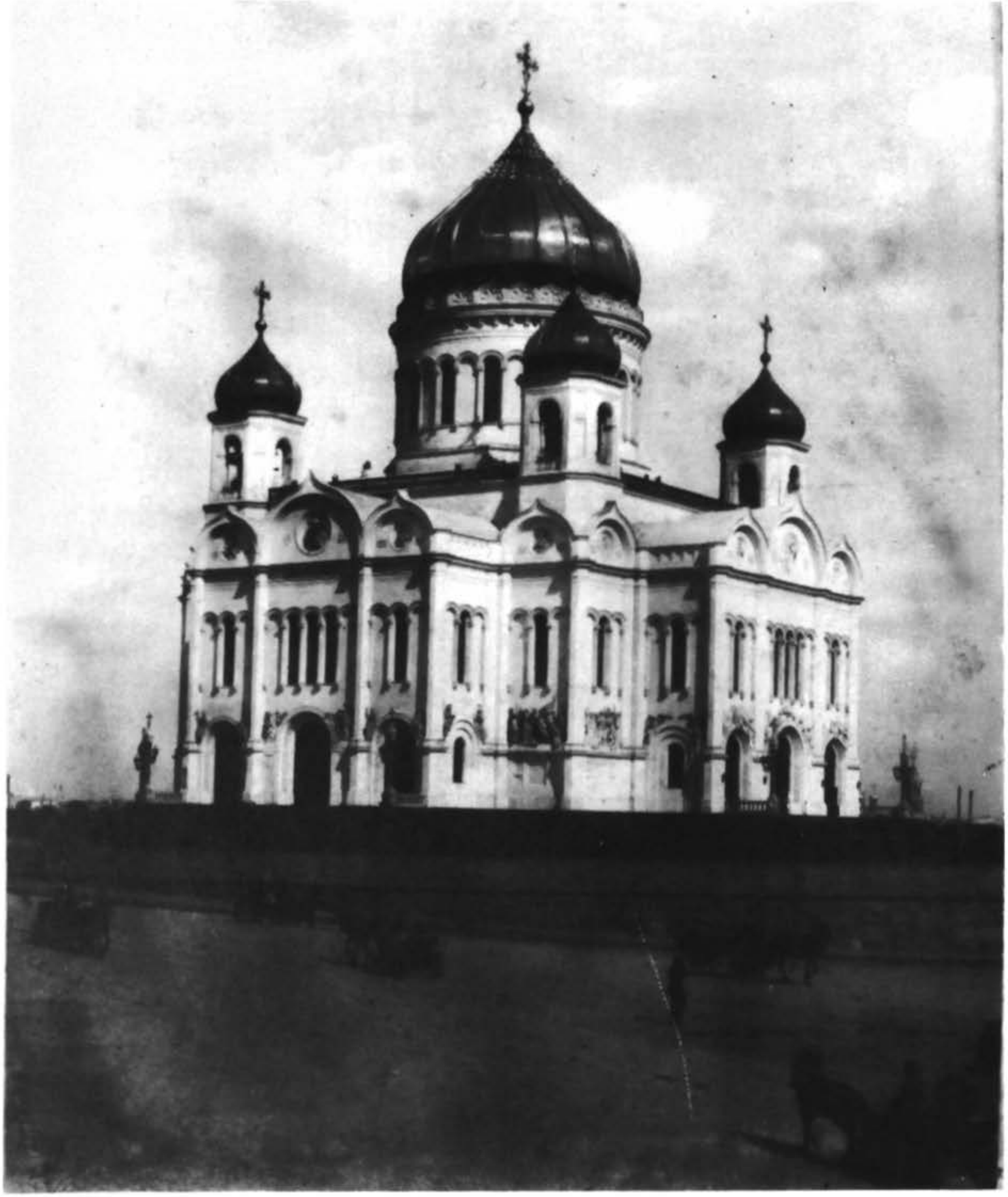
This is why Metropolitan Sergius, acting against the Soviet law concerning the "Separation of Church and State," has entered upon a very dangerous path.

And what is the result? Now it has already become clear that Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod have fallen under the frightful pressure of the agents of the government, even in their own ecclesiastical activity. Thus, the assignment and transfer of bishops is performed with the extremely close participation of the Soviet government; locally, the administrative and security organs watch to see whether the inhabitants accept the bishops who have been sent by the Synod of Metropolitan Sergius (the Orthodox bishops appear to their flocks under police protection), whether the name of Metropolitan Sergius is commemorated at the Divine services, and whether there is a prayer for the government (a government that considers prayer as charlatanry and ridicules it). Active church people who do not recognize Metropolitan Sergius are already being sent in banishment to Solovki, where the number of bishops grows every year; and even the question of the distribution and transfer of clergy is decided more by the Soviet government than by the church authority. The archpastoral sees, despite the decrees of the Sobor of 1917-18, are closed down in great numbers, which weakens the Church; and the bishops who are assigned, when they come to their posts, are obliged first of all to report to the well-known government establishments regarding their intentions and plans for church work, and to receive from them guiding instructions. The civil authority now has no need to use its own means to remove disagreeable church people; it simply gives a (secret) order for this to the Synod or to the local bishop.

Metropolitan Sergius is a total slave, an obedient instrument in the hands of persons well-known to us, the representatives of separate Soviet insti-



Novice Basil (Archbishop Leonty), Archimandrite Theodosius, Abbot of Kiev Caves Lavra, later martyred in Soviet prisons, and the future Archbishop Hermogenes Golubev who recently died in banishment in Zhyrovisi Monastery; Kiev Caves Lavra, 1926



Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow,
destroyed in the 1930's

tutions, and he has totally lost his moral-church authority, despite the word of the Apostle (II Tim. 2:15); because, behind every one even of his ecclesiastical orders, for us who are frightened and suspicious, there is to be seen an instigation from "those who are without." Besides this, our church administrative apparatus is placed in an impermissable nearness to the police organs in the Soviet government, something there has never been in the history of the Church and which cannot be tolerated. In a word, such a degradation and spitting upon, the holy Church has never yet endured.

But the holy Apostle Paul has handed down to us: *Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish* (Eph. 5:25-27), as the Bride of Christ. Do not, therefore, degrade the holy Church, do not dirty its immaculate garments.

The Church can be subjected to outward misfortunes, to persecutions and to difficult situations; but it cannot renounce its spiritual freedom and dignity. On the contrary, in misfortunes it shines yet more within, and is constantly renewed (II Cor. 4:16-17). Such is the law of spiritual life, both of the individual Christian and of the whole Church of Christ; and for this reason we understand bonds and sorrows as the mercy of God, for the Lord crowns His faithful slaves for them (II Cor. 4:17). But the Church will never agree to the degradation of the Holy Church, to the trampling upon its inward freedom. One cannot give over the freedom of the Church and its dignity to be trampled upon, *only that they may not be persecuted for the Cross of Christ* (Gal. 6:12), in the words of the Apostle.

The legalization which Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod are striving to conduct is totally unacceptable and impossible, because it contradicts the Soviet laws (is unlawful, illegal), is contrary to the nature of things, to the nature of the Church and the Soviet State, and is contrary to reason, for it strives to join what cannot be joined. Such a reform cannot be put into life practically, and quite evidently it is collapsing. In regard to the Church, it is a criminal act, for it sells the freedom of the Church's inward life and blasphemously degrades her sanctity and dignity.

As a plan of the opponents of the Church of God and the Christian religion, the reform of Metropolitan Sergius is a logical measure, well thought-through (but not by him, of course), wih the aims of bringing disorder into the Holy Church and destroying the religious life of the country. But an Orthodox Metropolitan and a Patriarchal Synod cannot support such ends.

But even if in the new church policy of Metropolitan Sergius there were not anything criminal or reprehensible with regard to the Church, still it would be necessary to reject it for this reason alone, that without having bettered the outward condition of the Church, to which it pretended, it has evoked great disturbance and scandal in the church people and, in general, in the majority of believers, from hierarchs to laymen.

The heart of a good shepherd naturally is pained from unbearable grief at seeing this shocking picture of great church desolation, which has already been half-accomplished by the hand of a leader of the Church. We do not need such church reforms. Let us rather again and again go into bonds and banishment, but only preserve the souls of the people of God which has been entrusted to us; for we shall all give a great answer for the perdition of our children. *Woe unto the world because of occasions for stumbling; for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh* (Matt. 18:6-7, 10). The holy Apostle Paul teaches: If you personally have an actual spiritual freedom and a higher understanding, so that what is outward does not disturb you, and even if you are correct in your acts which are unusual for the majority, still, if these acts disturb the infirm conscience of a brother, beware lest your freedom serve as an occasion of stumbling for the infirm, and lest from your knowledge, your infirm brother should perish, for whom Christ died, and thus sinning against your brethren and wounding their infirm conscience, you sin against Christ (I Cor. 8:9-13).

So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another (Rom. 14:15-20). This the Apostle said with regard to food, but among us the question of general church life is considerably more important than the question of food and of our personal acts, and the occasion for stumbling in this area is much deeper. *Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews or to Greeks, or to the Church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved* (I Cor. 10:24, 32-33). This is the obligatory rule for all pastors of the Church — not to seek their own profit, but the profit of the many so that they might be saved.

The chief canonical foundation of the lawfulness of authority in the Russian Church, both of Metropolitan Peter and of Metropolitan Sergius (the latter while Metropolitan Peter is absent), is to be found in the fact that both the one and the other were called and supported in their temporary situation by the episcopate of the Russian Orthodox Church as a whole. Apart from this, in our question it is important to remember certain personal qualities of Metropolitan Sergius.

He is an irreproachable monk, a modest, reverent archpastor, a profound church thinker, author of a theological book of exalted patristic spirit, *The Orthodox Teaching on Salvation,* a good upbringer of future clergy in the theological academies, and a good and active churchman whom we all so revered and loved. True, in his practical activity Metropolitan Sergius, having a weak will, always had need to depend on the stronger wills of his friends. And when this support was taken away from him for any reason, he began often to waver and make mistakes from weakness of will. (Alas, in 1922 Metropolitan Sergius went even so far as to recognize the Higher Church Authority of the "Living Church." At the present time, Metropolitan Sergius not only has been deliberately deprived of his friends, but he has been surrounded by a pre-determined assortment of people, who have entered into his Synod not at his own choice. Under the influence of this new environment and of pressure from "those without," after several confinements in the Moscow "inner prison," Metropolitan Sergius accepted his new "course" of church policy, which after a prolonged resistance he finally recognized as "correct" and obligatory for the Christian, and as answering to the needs of the Church.

It is not to be doubted, moreover, that in this undertaking of his, Metropolitan Sergius did not have any evil aims himself with regard to the Holy Church. Of course, he hoped to achieve peace in church life and the release of prisoners. In a word, a trusting man hoped to arrange the outward prosperity of the Church (after he had fulfilled the demands made of him and after the promises given to him would be fulfilled), and he expected from this also the inward good order of religious life.

The very principle of Metropolitan Sergius' aim — the bringing of the outward forms of church life into agreement with contemporary socio-political conditions, as a true legalization — is in essence correct, and, we repeat, it is according to the Apostolic teaching in spirit. But our weak-willed, though not badly-intentioned, leader, being subjected to insistent outward influence, did not hold firm within the ecclesiastical boundaries of this principle, having over-evaluated the significance of outward conditions for religious life, and chose as means for his correct aim not the confession of church truth, but rather personal cunning, lack of sincerity, and politics. Having raised such a weapon, unsuitable for use in church activity, Metropolitan Sergius has himself suffered from it, for the sons of this age are always more skilled than the sons of light in the use of this weapon.

But Metropolitan Sergius trusted in his own wisdom, in worldly means, instead of entirely hoping in the mercy and help of God, in the power of the Truth of Christ, having armed himself with the struggles of purity and confession and constant preparedness to endure sorrows and persecutions, by which struggles of the faithful the Church of God is adorned and eternally renewed, and not by the joys of life, as the Renovationists preach. But worldly means of battle, being unsuitable for an active religious Christian, the Apostle Paul totally renounces and condemns. He chastizes even the shadow of hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-14) and commands all Christians to renounce lying and to *speak the truth each one with his neighbor* (Eph. 4:25; Col. 3-9).

Metropolitan Sergius, establishing a mutual relationship between the Church and the Soviet State, has deviated in practice from the fundamental and correct idea which determines these relations; and having chosen worldly methods of activity, he has violated the tradition of the Orthodox Church regarding church politics; at the same time, he does not stand firm even on the basis of Soviet law. And on such a false foundation, what good thing can be built? But Metropolitan Sergius did not allow a stepping away in principle from the Truth, the Faith, and church teaching, and he has not violated the canonical order of the Church. In any case his sin is not of a dogmatic or a canonical character, but one of weakness in practice and of practical mistakes, of an incorrect direction of church policy and administrative activities. But since his policy has turned out in its result to be harmful and degrading for the Church of God, it must be changed, corrected, or else the unsuccessful administrator must be removed, perhaps a penance must be placed upon him, but he should not be excommunicated from the Church as an apostate, and there should not be a break of canonical communion with him as with a heretic or schismatic before the judgment of a Council.

Although at the present time there is no possibility of assembling a full Council of bishops for the consideration of general questions (including the question of public policy and the relation of the Church to the State), still considering the mistakes and the unacceptable activities of the leader, the bishops can raise their voice, for these mistakes have already been sufficiently made clear. The bishops are even obliged to step forth, and can even demand from the leader that he correct his mistakes and abandon the false path of worldly cunning in church matters.

To declare a premature break with the leader, or to refuse to participate in church government, to go into retirement — this would mean to leave one's flock during the misfortunes of the Holy Church, to go off to the side, giving place for the enemy, just so that one's own clean garments might not be soiled in the midst of the general confusion, and so that one might console oneself with the thought that we are not participating in the sin of the leader. But by this we commit the sin of insensitivity in the sorrows and sufferings of the Holy Church, while the responsibility for church life is not taken away from us. In the church misfortunes of antiquity, a hermit of many years would leave the desert so as to serve for the pacification of the suffering Church. The holy Apostle Paul shows in himself a flaming desire to be united through death with Christ in the heavenly mansions, so as to live in the sorrowful flesh for the benefit of his flock (Phil. 1:21-26).

We have occasion to meet — whether before their bonds or after, and many times in bonds — with very many archpastors who have endured the contemporary trials or have sat out their terms, and we have conversed with them personally or are in correspondence with them, and with full assurance we can declare that they will never give their approval to the work of Metropolitan Sergius as it is now proceeding. On the contrary, all with one accord say, with almost identical words, that they grieve and are greatly disturbed, even though they do not find it possible to break communion with Metropolitan Sergius.

But why do they not give their voices? Why do they not manifest their protest? Because they are isolated, and, as a result of this they are insufficiently informed, and they are not able to decide to express themselves in a final way without sufficient facts, all the more in that they know what significance will be given to their response. The Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius is known to prisoners only from the press, and it causes disturbance, grief, fear for the life of the Holy Church. But how its reform is being carried out in fact — how can the prisoners and exiles in the Siberian tundra or the Ziryani swamps know about this?

But if the temporary substitute of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens will stubbornly continue in his scheme, and will not free his post, we will depart from him as a whole Church, for the episcopate has the right and the foundation to deprive him of the authority in which it clothed him for building up and not destroying (II Cor. 10:8) the life of the Church. A man without will and not firm cannot guide church life in our times. Metropolitan Sergius has not been able to fulfill the command of the Apostle, *Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time* (Col. 4:5). With those that are without he has been "unequally yoked" (II Cor. 6:14), and he must correct his mistake. But if he is not strong enough to do this himself, let him leave it to others, freeing his place as leader of the Russian Orthodox Church. But if Metropolitan Sergius disobeys the voice of the Church and will stubbornly continue in his policy and pretend to the authority of the chief hierarch, then he of course will turn out to be a church rebel and schismatic.

Faithful laymen, like small children, with their own breasts are striving to protect from mockery and crude offenses their Mother, the Holy Church, which to all of us is dearer than life and freedom. But children are powerless. The fathers must step forth. You, archpastors and masters: upon you the Lord has placed the great responsibility for the fate of the Holy Church; to you has been entrusted its defense; you will give an answer to the Lord God for the souls of your spiritual children, for whom Christ died. To you is addressed the word of Christ, *I say unto you, My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye should fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast your soul into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him* (Luke 12:4-5).

The bonds of the servants of Christ serve to the greater success of the preaching of the Gospel, as it was also among the Apostles. *Most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear. I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation, through your supplication and the cooperation of the Spirit of Jesus Christ* (Phil. 1:14, 18-19). May there be glory to Him in the Church unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Note (by the authors): In 1905, on February 17, at a moleben in the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, Metropolitan Sergius gave a talk about the time when the civil law would cease to be a defense and a firm wall for the Russian Church. "Then," prophesied our present leader, "they will demand of us not beautiful phrases, not memorized syllogisms, but spirit and life; they will demand faith, and flaming faithfulness, the penetration of the Spirit of Christ. They will demand that we should write not with ink (and ink, it may be, borrowed from foreign inkwells at that), but with the blood of our own breasts. Will we answer to these demands, will we hold up under this fiery trial, will we endure at this truly frightful judgment? After all, it is not our well-wishing leadership that will judge us, and not we ourselves, but the Church of God itself will judge us, the Orthodox people itself which has entrusted to us the Church's work, and which without any pity will turn away from us, will cast us out, if it finds in us only a 'whited sepulchre' and a 'salt which has lost its savor' ".

Now there has begun upon us the judgment of the Holy Church. Will the well-founded prophetic words of Metropolitan Sergius be fulfilled? And first of all, will they be fulfilled in him?

Editor's Afterword (E. N. Lopeshanskaya)

No, his own prophetic words were not fulfilled in Metropolitan Sergius. He remained unharmed in the midst of the storm which surrounded him. He looked unfeelingly, indifferently on what was being done around him. Under the blows of hammers, there fell the age-old, irreplaceable holy things of Orthodoxy in the Russian land. Beyond the polar circle and in the sands of Turkestan vanished those whom he knew, with whom he studied, with whom he stood before the Altar, who, going to Golgotha, cast at him the reproach of betraying the Church. He outlived everything, even his own Declaration, which remained a piece of paper.

In the same way, the brother bishops, Bishops Pachomius of Chernigov and Abercius of Zhitomir, disappeared in the Soviet vastnesses. Of them there remains only this Epistle. He who will read it heedfully, entering deeply into every word, will clearly place before himself both their sufferings, and their flaming faith, and their unwavering firmness. Their struggle is all the higher in that they saw ahead the ever more thickly gathering clouds, and the approaching great storm which was gathering against the whole Christian world.

III

HIS LAST YEARS

Concerning the last period in the life of this Church Father of the last period of Christianity, we have a detailed picture as recalled by his nephew, now an archimandrite living in America. This testament is very characteristic of the inhuman times when the hated communism was being forced upon the middle strata of society—ordinary people who were trying to live peacefully and quietly, not harming anyone.

FOUNDING FATHERS

“I was born in 1915. My father was a priest as was my mother's father. We lived in the Vyatka diocese in the village of Kushin-Kubshinskoe. My mother's brothers were the two future bishops, Pachomius and Abercius, whom we seven brothers later regretted that we never knew as we were growing up. We went to the local schools. There was an intolerable bias and repression promoted by the school system upon all children of clergy families, even though the churches were already closed and the wearing of the priestly garb stricly forbidden. Nevertheless, once they found out that someone was the child of a clergyman, there was no end to the prejudiced harassment of the absolutely innocent youngster. This torment would stop only if the child would sign a statement renouncing his parents as 'enemies of the people.' Such a statement was then publicized and the child himself marked for life.

" My father was arrested. In his absence the authorities closed the church, boarded up the door and posted a bill announcing its closure to the believers. In actuality this meant that the church was open to vandalism. Then they released my father from the prison with the deliberate intent of bringing him to the steps of his desecrated church, so he could see with obvious pain the taking down of the bells which he knew were to be melted down for the purpose of making guns to kill people. Thus, our church was destroyed. Other churches were turned into garages, graineries, chicken hatcheries...; chapels as a rule were turned into public lavatories. Father stayed home since he had no right even to work.

"One day, my older brother Alexander confessed to my mother that in school they were demanding that he sign a paper renouncing his father. If he refused he was to be expelled from the school. Alexander had no intention of signing any such renunciation which he considered to be an unjustifiable betrayal of his father whom he so loved and respected. To avoid the consequences of refusing to sign the renunciation, for the past week he had secretly gone to the woods when the other children went to school, returning home after school was dismissed. But he knew he could not continue this any longer. Mother told this to our father. He called Alexander in to see him and said, 'Sit down, son. Take a pen and sign the renunciation.' The boy refused. Then my father angrily demanded that he write and began to dictate the text of the renunciation himself.. The boy broke down and began to cry. Then my father began to beg him saying, 'My dearest Sashik, my darling boy. I'm old and will soon be arrested and then die. You have a whole life ahead of you. Be reasonable, my boy. You must get an education and acquire a good position, for without it you will perish in this society. I know that you love me; for my sake, sign this paper which will help you to get along.' But my brother remained steadfast in his refusal to betray his father and would not sign the renunciation. The next day he left home and we did not see him for many years. Soon after this incident, my father, Priest-Martyr Vladimir Zagarsky, was arrested and exiled to Komsomolsk on the Amur River where he was put to work logging in order to drain swamps. And he drowned there in 1937.

Several years later, on one sunny day, we were all surprised by a visit—it was our Alexander! He was healthy, happy, and brought us many gifts. He told us that not wanting to betray his beloved father, he had left home and gone to a large city. He was then 12 years old and he joined a group of homeless juvenile delinquints. When he was picked up by the police, he gave them a different name and story about himself. He was sent to a school as a legitimate Soviet citizen, received a good profession and now he had a good paying joy, and was about to get married. But he never betrayed his father. What an inspiring example of honor and bravery—in a child!

"After the arrest of my father I also had to go to another town, to Yaransk where there were many schools. I stayed there with my mother's brother—the widowed priest Nicholas, his son Boris, and my Aunt Vera, my mother's sister who had never married. There I lived and went to school. Not long after my arrival I noticed something strange: someone's steps were often heard pacing in the attic, but I was afraid to ask who it was. I also noticed that my aunt carried food upstairs to the attic every day. One summer day, when my cousin and I were playing in the loft of the barn, we heard a strange noise. From the barn window we clearly saw that my aunt was being pushed out of the attic window by some large, bearded man. We yelled out if she needed help, but she quickly answered, 'No, don't let him see you.' It turned out that she had brought up the dinner and this man had wanted to escape. My aunt had prevented him from jumping out of the window and he had been trying to push her out of his way when we saw him. But even after this we did not dare to ask her openly about him. However, I pieced together what she later confirmed for me: it was my uncle, Archbishop Pachomius.

"When in Solovki or the Mai-Guba prison labor-camps, or wherever else he was tortured, he had experienced such indescribable torment that he had become a physical invalid, incapable of doing the work demanded of him by the cruel camp administration. This condition put him on a list of a veritable 'deadman's' status. His soul could no longer endure the anti-human conditions, and he had a mental breakdown. Of course, in such cases, the communists, in accordance with Lenin's directives, conveniently exterminate their victims so as not to be bothered with caring for them. But in the case of my uncle it would only serve to advance the cause of world atheism to let a mad bishop loose, so that the very sight of him would discredit faith in God among simple people. And so, to show how benevolent the Soviet Union is towards sick people, he was deliberately well-groomed and warmly dressed, and under a careful convoy accompaniment, my poor uncle was 'graciously' brought back to his family from the 'northern resort' to the silent astonishment of his brother and sister who received him and took care of him. They place him in the attic so as not to attract the attention of the neighbors, lest he, a 'servant of the cult' be spotted and shot, bringing with it a long line of trying consequences. Aunt Vera took care of him exclusively. He was locked up and until that day in the barn, I had never seen him. Evidently, during his moments of sanity, he would realize what a burden he caused to his close ones and naturally wanted to escape. It was in this state that I had seen him for the first time. What a handsome figure he was though, tall, stately—a true innocent sufferer for the sins of the world.

"Meanwhile, another communist decree came out: throughout the whole of Russia not a single person was permitted to possess any gold or silver; it had to be given over to the authorities. Those citizens who would not hand over any such things voluntarily, risked an unceremonious visitation by a special search band which could break in at anytime, day or night, and go through all one's possessions and confiscate anything at their whim. Everybody, already totally robbed of anything that had any appreciable value, would nevertheless patiently bring in their watches, wedding rings, spoons, forks, etc., so as not to be terrorized. One old lady, a school friend of my uncle Nicholas' childhood days, brought to him three or four teaspoons which is all she had left from her mother, and asked him to hide them for her so she would have something to sell when times got even worse. As a pastor he could not refuse her. They were placed behind a brick in the fireplace. But the search committee came and found them. My uncle was tried and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. I witnessed the trial and was amazed at the absurdity of the case. However, I understood full well that it was only a pretense in order to kill off good, honest people because they were a hindrance to the communist program of installing Satan's hell upon earth. My uncle, Priest Nicholas, was gone and lost forever. Another new martyr in my family.

"Now it became too hard for Aunt Vera to care for my uncle, Vladika Pachomy. One day she called me, and with tears and spiritual bravery, she said to me, 'Say goodbye to your uncle.' She had decided to drive him to the town of Kukurka, near Kotelnik, and to place him in a mental hospital. I remember this parting very well. The winter had settled in; everywhere there was a lot of white glistening snow. My uncle came down dressed in a warm overcoat with a black Mount Athos monastic cap on his head; he had a large black beard that had not yet turned grey. He looked at me with a quiet gaze. He did not bless me for we were afraid; he just embraced me and was gone. A strange sweet feeling came over my heart; it settled in like some beautiful melancholy music that lingers on even though the sound has died long ago. That was all I saw of my uncle New-Martyr Pachomius.

"Two months later my Aunt Vera received a letter from the hospital which stated: 'Your brother has died.' My aunt cried silently for a long time. Soon came the spring of 1937. It was warm and sunny and many flowers were in bloom. My aunt gathered her things together and went to Kukurka to visit the grave of her brother. There was a hospital cemetery there and uniform crosses stood on the graves. She found her brother's grave and there knelt down and wept for a long time. A hospital nurse came along and asked the reason for her tears. She told her that she was cying over the recent death of her brother. 'Oh, no,' said the nurse, 'the people here seldom die a natural death. Your brother was killed off like the rest; he was injected with poison.' This is what my Aunt Vera told me upon her return to the bleak reality of our Soviet life.

"Many years later, already in South America, I met Archbishop Leonty who knew my uncle well. In fact, he was my uncle's cell-attendant in a monastery in Chernigov. He told me many things about my uncle—how he accompanied him to the all-Russian Council in Moscow (1917-1918) which elected Patriarch Tikhon; how he met many holy hierarchs of God there: Archbishop Theodore of the Danilov Monastery and others. He had many fond memories of him and in recalling them his face lit up with happiness. It was not difficult to see that he loved Archbishop Pachomius very much. He told me that while in the Chernigov monastery where my uncle was abbot, they would often have walks together in the beauty of nature's bosom. Once, walking somewhere in the monastery grove, surrounded by blossoming trees and flowers, singing birds and fluffy white clouds floating in the azure blue sky, he told his poetic cell-attendant that he should start learning by heart church services in preparation for the time, coming soon, when Christians will be deprived of everything; there will be no service books, no church utensils..., that he should learn by heart whole sections of Gospel readings, and be able to perform molebens and other services at the spur of the moment. He presented him with his portrait and a touching inscription which I inherited from Archbishop Leonty and here I share it with all those who love the New Martyrs''

Here is what Archbishop Pachomius gave to one of his faithful followers, the young novice Basil, on May 24, 1923; it is a quote from his beloved St. Isaac the Syrian:

''Dear Vasya F.

'Paradise is the love of God from which Adam fell; and since then joy did not encounter him even though he labored and tilled the hard earth.'

'He who has acquired love, tastes Christ every day and every hour and becomes immortal through it. Love is much sweeter than life. He who has acquired love becomes clothed in God Himself.'

'The glory of the body is submission to chastity through the help of God. A chaste body in the sight of God is worth more than a pure sacrifice.'

From St. Isaac the Syrian. Unworthy Archbishop Pachomius.''

Sources: Archbishop Nikon's Biography of Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky, vol. I, p. 188, vol. IV, p. 201. I. M. Andreyev, *History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to our Days*, Jordanville, 1950. Archpriest M. Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs*, vol. II, pp. 91-92, vol. III in manuscript. Archpriest M. Polsky, *The Canonical Situation of the Russian Orthodox Church*, Jordanville, 1948. E. M. Lopeshanskaya, *Bishop-Confessors*, San Francisco, 1971, pp. 10-25. Archbishop Leonty of Chile, Memoirs (manuscript). Irene Mashin, unpublished memoirs on Archbishop Abercius; Recollections of Archimandrite Anastassy of Bryte, California.

13

Archpriest Valentin

A PREACHER OF HESYCHASM IN THE WORLD

Commemorated January 26 (1936?)

> *The spiritual life is such a*
> *realm into which the wisdom*
> *of this world does not penetrate.*
>
> Bishop Theophan the Recluse

Unfortunately, very little is known to us about this zealous Church teacher of unadulterated, mystical Orthodoxy in our modern times. Whatever little we do know about him comes from his liberal contemporaries, who as a rule did not deign to recognize the uniqueness and uniformity of patristic philosophy, which to him constituted the very essence of life. In this respect he was their enemy, one whom they could not understand—evidently because of his genuine conversion experience. The divinely-revealed teaching of God and man, preserved throughout the centuries and enriched within the saving enclosure of the Orthodox Church, is a limitless ocean of wisdom and should be approached with fear and trembling so as not to soil any aspect of it through our sinfulness and pride. It can in no way be improved upon by the daring hand of our intellectual worldliness. Fr. Valentine's inquisitive mind was in awe and wonder before the accessible reality of deification. In this respect he was not of this world, but remained in the world as a pastor who guided people to the realm of sobriety, hesychasm, and otherworldliness. And when a crucial test came, in the form of Sergianism, he immediately discerned the falseness of it and at once publicly rejected it by issuing his own "Separation from Metropolitan Sergius," thereby defending the patristic world-view. His two available short works, *Monasticism in the World* (1921) and *Against General Confession* (1926), give us enough evidence of his importance as a modern apostle of unadulterated Orthodoxy in a time of rising apostasy.

From the few details of his biography one can surmise that he came from an aristocratic Polish family, received a good education, and was an extremely talented and impressive young man. His large eyes looked upon the world with seriousness. At the age of 15 he could already debate Kant with professional philosophers, and soon he started a crusade against the vices of society, in which he advocated a ruthless mortification of the flesh. His talks produced a striking impression. He published at least two magazines ("Problems of Religion" and "Living Life") dealing with Christian problems in a society whose intellectual leaders were luring Orthodox Christians through foreign tastes and fashions away from Christ. In 1905 he left Moscow for Petersburg in order to find supporters for a "Christian Brotherhood of Struggle." He published a book called *Antichrist*, which had a considerable success. He ardently defended monasticism against the decadent free-thinkers of his time who were thinly clothed in conservative Orthodoxy. This led him to visit the monk-ascetics of the Caucasus, and he later incorporated his impressions of these desert-dwellers in his book, *The Heavenly Citizens*, or, *My Travels Among the Anchorites of the Caucasus Mountains* (Moscow, 1915).

After the Revolution he married and was ordained a priest; he was the head priest in a Moscow church known as "St. Nicholas the Big Cross" on St. Elias St. There in the 1920's he attracted a large congregation by his eloquent sermons, which were eagerly received as rich food in the midst of the general scarcity of genuine Orthodox spirituality in Russia at this time. He went to Optina Monastery and became the spiritual son of Elder Anatole, to whom he dedicated his masterpiece, *Six Readings on the Mystery of Confession and its History* in which he dealt a blow to the practice of general confession which had become fashionable among the liberal clergy of his day.

Father Valentine was an ardent proponent of the frequent usage of the Jesus Prayer. He held that monastic discipline in our day of universal luke-warmness among Christians was not only possible but *imperative* in order to preserve the "salt of the earth," i.e., the Orthodox truths, in the hearts of men who are being cunningly attacked by the spirit of secularization. With this in mind, he conducted a series of talks (from 1921 - 1926) using the strictly monastic teaching of the *Ladder* of St. John Climacus, where he strove to apply it to ordinary daily life in the contemporary modern world which had become actually hostile to Christianity.

ARCHPRIEST VALENTIN SVENTITSKY

One of his friends, S.I. Fudel, gives us a brief insight into the spiritual world of this otherworldly pastor:

"Father Valentine Sventitsky on one hand seemed to be a regular priest with a family, and on the other an experienced teacher of continuous prayer. It is a remarkable fact that even in 1925 in the city of Moscow, this man managed to arouse people in his parish to a life of intense prayer. He did much for the general defense of faith. But his main significance was that he called all people to conduct ceaseless prayer, an uninterrupted burning of the spirit.

'Prayer,' he would say, 'erects walls around our monastery in the world.' It was also he who resolved the complex problem of inward evil in the Church. 'Any sin in the Church,' he said, 'is a sin not *of* the Church but *against* the Church.' He also taught that one should not interrupt one's ceaseless mental prayer while attending church services.

"Once after I returned from exile to Moscow in 1925, I chanced to be at Liturgy when Father Valentine was serving. I came in at the end of the service and when he came out with the ambo prayer, I was shocked to see his face. I cannot express my impression other than to say that it was the face of a man having just sacrificed himself as a burnt offering—in truth and pain—, and now deeply shaken, was coming out to us, oblivious to his earthly surroundings. But even then I made a stupid mistake. Instead of waiting until he would be free to talk with me, I went straight into the altar. Immediately he raised his hand as one with authority, stopping me, and said: 'Only those who believe in God may enter here! Do you believe in God?' We hadn't seen each other for three years, and he, having received false information about me, was questioning me when I dared to come into his holy of holies.

"Another time I recall how, while in a crowded Butyrka prison-ward in 1922, I was endlessly pacing amidst the prisoners when I bumped into Father Valentine. In embarassment I asked for some stupid reason, 'Where are you going?' All of a sudden his face became remarkably light with some inward warmth, and he said, 'I was coming to you.' Usually he was so estranged, closed up, stern and impatient,like his distant relative—a Polish cardinal. But now he had the radiant and quiet beam of light of true Russian sanctity—the kind and all-seeing sanctity of a holy elder. He was coming straight towards me, towards my very soul which he was then probably protecting against some evil. Thus, even a prison can enlighten and illuminate a soul and bring out something which at other times is impossible to attain."

In 1927 his free spirit could not be silent, and he openly reacted against Metropolitan Sergius who was so opposite to him in spirit.

We know full well what consequences were suffered by all those who openly disagreed with the "Declaration." Lev Regelson, in his *Tragedy of the Russian Church*, states that Metropolitan Sergius in 1929 pronounced all those who opposed his Declaration to be counter-revolutionaries subject to arrest; fifteen bishops were arrested right away. The arrests were conducted very simply: a GPU agent would come to the bishop and pose one question: "How do you regard the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius?" If the bishop answered that he did not accept it, then the agent would conclude: "That means that you are a counter-revolutionary." And the bishop would automatically be arrested. So perished all those who raised their voice in protest. And the fate of Father Valentine could be no different.

In Orthodox history Father Valentine acquired a crown of victory from God, for he preserved the flame of genuine Christian inspiration and pinpointed the essence of the subtle temptation of the enemy of our salvation, thereby leading straight into Paradise the flock entrusted to him by God, to Whom be glory and honor for ever. Amen.

THE SEPARATION OF ARCHPRIEST VALENTIN SVENTITSKY

Document of December, 1927

To Metropolitan Sergius.

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

REALIZING ALL MY responsibility before the Lord for my own soul and for the salvation of the souls of the flock entrusted to me, and with the blessing of Dimitry, Bishop of Gdov, I am breaking off canonical and prayerful communion with You and the council of bishops that has been organized under You, which has illegally appropriated to itself the title of "Patriarchal Synod," as well as with everyone who is in canonical communion with You; and I no longer consider You the Substitute of the *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne, for the following reasons:

ARCHPRIEST VALENTIN SVENTITSKY

Your Declaration of July 16|29, as well as everything that is generally known of Your governance of the Church from the time of the publication of the Declaration, without any doubt establishes that You are placing the Church in that same dependence on the government in which the first two "Renovations" wished to place it, in defiance of the holy canons of the Church and the decrees of the civil authority itself.

Both the "Living Church," which seized the authority of the Patriarch, and "Gregorianism," which seized the authority of the *Locum Tenens*, and now You, who have abused the latter's trust — are all doing the same general anti-ecclesiastical, renovationist work; but You are the founder of the most dangerous of its forms, because while renouncing ecclesiastical freedom, at the same time You preserve the fiction of canonicity and Orthodoxy. This is worse than the violation of separate canons.

I am not creating a new schism, and I do not break the unity of the Church; I go away from and I lead my flock out of a subtle renovationist trap — *lest imperceptibly and little by little we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has given us as a free gift by His Own blood* (8th Canon of the Third Ecumenical Council).

Remaining a faithful and obedient son of the One Holy Orthodox Church, I recognize as *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne Metropolitan Peter; I recognize also those bishops who, not arbitrarily appropriating to themselves general ecclesiastical authority, have already broken canonical ties with You, following their testimony: "until the judgement of a complete Local council," i.e., a council with the participation of all Orthodox bishops, or until the open and full repentance before the Holy Church of the Metropolitan himself. *Archpriest Valentin Sventitsky*

Sources: Polsky's ***Russia's New Martyrs***, Vol. II; Regelson, ***The Tragedy of the Russian Church***; Zernov, ***The Russian Religious Renaissance***, pp. 105-6; ***Nadezhda*** (periodical), No. 2, 1979 and No. 5, 1981.

14

Bishop Damascene

BUILDER OF THE INVISIBLE CITY OF GOD

Commemorated Dec. 4 (†1935)

> *Two loves have built two cities:*
> *the City of God and the city of man.*
> Blessed Augustine

BISHOP DAMASCENE, WHO in the world was Dimitry Dimitrievich Tsedrik, was born in Cherson, in the family of a poor postal official. The whole family was penetrated by an elevated Christian spirit. This is shown by the fact that the brother of Bishop Damascene, Nicholas, became a priest, and at the very beginning of the October Revolution in 1917 was executed by shooting for his fearless confession of the faith and his accusation of the Bolsheviks.

Bishop Damascene received his higher education in an agricultural institute, which he finished with the title of agronomist. Later, during his exile in the region of Turukhan, this education came in very handy for him. After his graduation, Bishop Damascene entered the Institute of Eastern Languages in Kazan. After completing it he accepted monasticism and worked as a missionary in the Peking mission. Where he was after he returned from the Far East we do not know.

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE REVOLUTION

BISHOP DAMASCENE APPEARED as a Hieromonk in Kiev in 1919. The Metropolitan of Kiev, Anthony Khrapovitsky, personally knowing and valueing Hieromonk Damascene, assigned him as Diocesan missionary. He became an auditor at the Kiev Theological Academy, and at the same time he was numbered among the brethren of the St. Michael Monastery.

It was not in the character of Bishop Damascene to be inactive and to concentrate only on himself. He found a small brotherhood of Saint Vladimir in a cozy corner of town not far from the monastery. No matter what might be happening on the streets of Kiev (this was during the civil war), and no matter what kind of weather it was, Hieromonk Damascen unfailingly came on feast days at six o'clock to the brotherhood, served a moleben and akathist, and then gave a sermon even if very few people were present. On one stormy winter evening as he was about to leave the brotherhood, gunshots were heard on the street. The door on the street was instantly locked. After some time, since nothing more was heard, everyone went out on the street. On the opposite side, against the brilliant white snow, there could be seen the dark figure of a murdered man. Bishop Damascene cried out in agitation: "What kind of Christians are we! Around us they kill people, and we hide instead of helping!"

The events of the civil war forced Hieromonk Damascene to leave Kiev and go to the Crimea, where he was soon raised to the rank of archimandrite and assigned as superior of the Saint George Monastery, which was blown up at the beginning of the Second World War by the Bolsheviks. Soon after the establishment of Soviet authority in the Crimea, Archimandrite Damascene was arrested and spent many months in prison. Then he was freed and exiled out of the Crimea.

From the Crimea he set out for Moscow to see His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, who consecrated him as Bishop of Nezhin and Glukhov, governing the Diocese of Chernigov, because Archbishop Pachomius had already been arrested. The activity of Bishop Damascene in the Diocese of Chernigov was short but energetic. A gifted preacher and missionary, bold and energetic, Bishop Damascene spent a large part of his time traveling about the cities and towns of the Chernigov Diocese. He was arrested many times in Chernigov and spent much time in prisons, where seventy or eighty people were placed in cells built for twenty. Among the prisoners, as everywhere else, the extraordinary bishop enjoyed renown and respect. When he was free, everywhere he went, at the first opportunity he would organize a "house church". This was true later also in Turukhan and other places.

Altogether Bishop Damascene, together with his periods of arrest, spent about two years in the Chernigov Diocese. Then, like other bishops, he was exiled at first to Kharkov, then arrested and sent to Moscow, where he was in the Butyrka prison. At that time it was already the custom that bishops who were exiled not immediately to distant places, would travel through Moscow and without fail would serve a solemn pannihida in the Donskoy Monastery at the grave of Patriarch Tikhon. By this they emphasized their solidarity with him, their faithfulness to his testament, and their readiness to go on his path of the cross.

EXILE TO POLOI

Bishop Damascene spent several months in the Butyrka prison in Moscow. His only consolation at this time, as he related, was the reading of an English Bible which someone had given to him there. From Butyrka Bishop Damascene was sent to the region of Turukhan, where his place of residence was to be Poloi, which was 150 miles north of Turukhan and north of the Arctic Circle. One could travel there on steamship only during the short summer, and at other times over the frozen Enisei river by dogsled. Bishop Damascene went there early in the autumn; there was no more navigation on the Enisei, and the winter path had not become firm. Therefore he had to stay several months in Krasnoyarsk, a large and wealthy fishing city on the river Enisei with many churches and monasteries and the ringing of bells. Bishop Damascene's appearance there caused a sensation, and he had no problems with daily life at all. The monks and nuns of the many monasteries of the city and its environs, upon which the Soviet power had not yet laid its hands, evidently because of the distance, considered it their duty to come to Bishop Damascene and receive his blessing.

Soon the broad Enisei froze and Bishop Damascene had to set out on his long journey, accompanied by a convoy of the GPU. The long narrow sleds were pulled by six or twelve dogs. The journey lasted about six weeks.

At the time of Bishop Damascene's arrival in Poloi, it did not deserve the name of village, because it was composed mainly of a single house, in which lived the family of a hunter. There was another little house in which two exiled bishops lived, and finally there was a half ruined cabin, the roof full of holes, with a broken-down stove and holes two inches wide in the board walls; this was the future cell of Bishop Damascene.

The Arctic summer together with the spring lasts for a month. At this time the tundra comes to life and is covered with a carpet of northern berries. But with the coming of summer there appear a myriad of tormenting mosquitoes and swamp gnats. They stick to the face and even penetrate shoes, biting the feet to blood. The local residents smear their faces with tar against the stings of the mosquitoes; Bishop Damascene wore a net. Bishop Damascene indicated how tormenting these mosquito bites were in one of his letters: "Where has this Egyptian plague been preserved?"

In the summer there are white nights, literally illuminated by phosphorescent light. In the winter it freezes up to sixty-five degrees below and more, for about half a year; the Arctic night lasts twenty-four hours, alternating with a semi-darkness softened by the light of the snow and a thick twilight, interrupted by the northern lights for about an hour or two a day. And the snow covers everything, muffles everything, fills everything, but protects against the fierce frost, making up for the large holes in the walls of the houses.

The vegetation consisted of age-old cedars on the banks of the Enisei and some bushes. Here Bishop Damascene's knowledge of farming came in handy. He was able somehow to have a small garden and planted some vegetables, which were so lacking for the people beyond the Arctic Circle, something which caused scurvy to run wild there. These vegetables and the parcels saved Bishop Damascene from scurvy. Reindeer ran about in whole herds, and there were white polar bears.

Such were the conditions of weather and climate in which the persecutors of Christianity placed these entirely innocent bishops. These conditions could not help but be reflected in their health.

How did Bishop Damascene arrange his life in Poloi? At first he and the subdeacon who had accompanied him had to stay with the bishops who were living there, since the half-ruined house, which had become vacant because of the death of the former occupant, needed much repair, and it was possible to make repairs only in the spring and summer. At this time his cell attendant arrived, and the work proceeded at full speed. Bishop Damascene was well acquainted with carpentry, and he repaired the hole in the roof himself. He taught his cell attendant how to prepare and dry bricks by hand; from them they remade the stove. They left the holes in the walls—the snow did the best repair job on them. Being a lover of labor and inventive, Bishop Damascene with the help of his cell attendant made the things that were most necessary, and likewise a wooden altar-table, glueing the boards together with fish glue. Using particles from his own chest cross, Vladika was able to make an antimension from a simple cloth with a cross drawn upon it.

The mail, which came to Turukhan on dogsled once a month, brought Bishop Damascene several parcels with wheat flour and grape wine from his numerous friends and admirers. In a place where previously there had not stepped a single Christian foot, now every day the Liturgy was celebrated.

Thus Bishop Damascene wrote to his clergy, "And I see all of you, my near and dear ones, standing with me at the altar-table." When the Liturgy was celebrated for the first time, the few inhabitants of the village of Poloi came; they had no idea of Christianity, being for the most part pagans of Mongol blood. Bishop Damascene had some knowledge in medicine and was able to give them medical help. Hearing the church singing, the children leaped up and began to sing themselves, and it required much effort to quiet them down.

The day of Bishop Damascene began with Liturgy. After Liturgy he ate, and then he took his prayer rope in his hands and occupied himself with the reading of Sacred Scripture, with the mail he received, and so forth; or he would give spiritual instruction to his cell attendant. Then, with his prayer rope in his hands, he set out for a walk on the shores of the Enisei. Thanks to the extraordinary transparency of the Arctic air, from the high bank of the river there was a view to such a distant horizon that, in the words of his cell attendant, even the Ukraine was visible.

After his walk he would perform the evening Divine services. In the interval between the Divine services all the work was performed. Vladika washed his own clothes and baked prosphora himself. One should add that it was necessary to keep heat going the whole day and night so as not to freeze. This could be done because there was plenty of firewood around. Illumination was by means of smokey sticks with oil, by candles (when they were sent), or by lamps; one can imagine how much soot and smoke was caused by one or the other, and how ruinous this was for the health of Bishop Damascene!

In Poloi Bishop Damascene was cut off from everything happening in the rest of Russia; he lived as the hermits must have lived in the time of Ivan the Terrible. On his table was the Sacred Scripture, the history of the Church, and the Lives of Saints. He was first of all an Orthodox monk, and in his forced seclusion he continued to seek the Kingdom of God within himself. In a letter of January 28, 1928, he wrote from Poloi: "It is essential to understand that the condition of this Kingdom of God upon earth is entirely independent of the outward conditions and forms of public life, and likewise that the fruits of the possession of this Kingdom are felt by every believer entirely independently of his material and public position, and these fruits give him the possibility of living in peace and joy in the midst of deprivations, belittlements and trials. This explains the peace and light by which the bitterness of imprisonment and misfortune are turned into joy among our confessors, and their readiness for the further sorrows which are the result of their present sorrows."

It is natural that this feeling of the dark kingdom brought Bishop Damascene into an eschatological way of thinking. In this connection he is a representative of his epoch. The whole pre-revolutionary epoch is characterized by precisely such vague eschatological presentiments. This may be seen most strongly of all in Vladimir Soloviev in his *Three Conversations* on Antichrist and in his poem "Pan-mongolism"; quietly there arises, to replace the star of Bethlehem, the red five-pointed star. It already signals the approach of a new epoch, and declares beforehand the manifestation of something new on the horizon of human history. After the twilight (represented by pre-revolutionary literature), there comes the night; Bishop Damascene and his contemporaries entered into the realm of night.

The sensitive and receptive Bishop Damascene felt this darkness most vividly, and he called on people to place against it the Light which Christianity gives to every believing soul. "And our great good is in the fa that every believer, being the bearer of this Light, is not lost and does not go astray in the midst of the surrounding darkness. Only one must partake of this Light more frequently." Such, in a few words, was the attitude of Bishop Damascene in Poloi.

From the banks of the Enisei, the penetrating gaze of Bishop Damascene looks through the limitless expanses of snow towards his flock, and in the twilight of his cell and in the northern lights there is raised up a fervent prayer for his perishing spiritual native land.

One winter day there was en extraordinary event: someone was coming. They were bringing Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan to a village even farther north than Poloi. Metropolitan Cyril went from one exile to another, and finally he was being led to the region of Turukhan, almost on the very Pole. What a meeting there was between them in Poloi!

And this is in the twentieth century! In the West there is the noisy sound of jazz, music resounds, the ringing of church bells is heard....Theaters and movie houses are open; churches are also open. But alike to the lightminded and to those who think profoundly, to believers and unbelievers, it is matter of indifference what is happening in the East, beyond the Arctic Circle.

It is not known whether Bishop Damascene knew Metropolitan Cyril earlier. Only one thing is clear: that after their meeting in the region of Turukhan they became forever friends.

Bishop Damascene and Metropolitan Cyril belong to those who have conquered Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and who loved not their souls even unto death (Apoc. 12:11), a death on the cross. In his epistle to Metropolitan Sergius, Bishop Damascene writes: "We had already conquered, but you hindered us." This victory, or, as Bishop Damascene called it, "the royal path" by which the Church went before the Declaration, consisted of a self-sacrificing confession on the part of the whole clergy, to the very last one.

It was in Poloi that the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius found Bishop Damascene. How great was the impression it left on him may be seen in the fact that he wrote in connection with it 150 letters. It was impossible to send such a large number of letters by mail; they would not reach their destinations. Therefore Bishop Damascene decided to part with his only cell attendant (the subdeacon had already left earlier) and to send him with these letters to Moscow and to several large cities in the Ukraine; some of the letters were delivered personally, but the majority were placed in mail boxes in various cities.

RETURN TO CENTRAL RUSSIA
THE DECLARATION OF METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

Before Bishop Damascene stood the question: What should he do? How should be arrange his further life? His soul was divided in two: on the one hand, he was drawn away from the world; and on the other, he could not remain a passive spectator of the destruction of what was most dear to him, the Russian Orthodox Church.

BISHOP DAMASCENE

From Krasnoyarsk on November 28, 1928, he wrote: "I had a plan to remain in the Siberian Taiga for the rest of the three years which were given to me after the completion of my exile in Turukhan....Siberia seemed to me the most hopeful refuge in my position. However, letters and telegrams from my close ones have inspired me to change my plans, and today I am leaving for Starodub in the province of Bryansk, where the clergy has invited me 'unanimously'. Earlier Starodub was a part of the diocese of Chernigov. I am also inclined to visit European Russia by the desire to become more closely acquainted with the condition of things and to see certain people."

Although he was not allowed to visit Moscow, he did manage on his way to go there and see Metropolitan Sergius personally. He wrote: "I see something providential in my illness—otherwise I could not have gone to Moscow, while now I not only have been there and have seen some necessary people, but I even had a prolonged conversation with Metropolitan Sergius. As for the result of this conversation, I will say the following: If from afar I still assumed the possibility of the existence of facts which might justify his conduct, now these assumptions also have been destroyed. Now for me there is no justification whatever for Metropolitan Sergius and company!"

Settling in Starodub, Bishop Damascene did not feel himself either calm or firm. The whole time he was in expectation of some change. On May 21, 1929, he wrote: "I received an invitation from Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov) of Petrograd to be his helper, and of course I refused, as before I have refused the offers of the Sergianists."

According to his custom, Bishop Damascene here also was full of energy. He saw most of his friends, conducted with them and with bishops friendly to him an active correspondence, and prepared a statement against Metropolitan Sergius. He did this after a whole series of waverings and doubts: Was it even worthwhile to address Metropolitan Sergius with an epistle of reproach? But the active principle in Bishop Damascene took precedence over the contemplative and ascetic principle.

Bishop Damascene accepted everything he saw at this time in a most churchly way. From Starodub he wrote on December 23, 1928: "How monstrously great is the crime which is now being performed— the murder of the souls of children! Are there any pure joys among contemporary children? Now, it seems, the whole atmosphere is filled with the fluids of evil and corruption. Now only those who preserve in themselves the grace of Christ are isolated from the influence of these satanic fluids."

And again: "I will share further with you my conviction that the whole meaning of the present trials consists in the fact that the time has come to purify our life, the life of faith, the life of the Mysteries of Christ, from outward layers. It has become too clear that for many, especially the luke-warm, the outward form of religious life has completely replaced the essence of this life, and this is why the outward success of the atheists has become possible. As for this success of theirs, it is a fact, as far as it concerns the corruption of the generation of children and young people."

In his epistle to Metropolitan Sergius in connection with his Declaration, Bishop Damascene writes: "Examining the present sorrowful path of the Russian Church in the perspective of eternity, one comes to an understanding of the exalted meaning of all the present trials. The quenching of the spirit of faith in the masses, the abasement of the ideals that bring salvation in the Church, the forgetting by pastors of their duty, the multiplication of lawlessness because of this, and the growing cold of the love of the many—could not but lead to serious consequences. In every organism the quenching of the spirit causes convulsions. We stand too far in our church life from the commandments of Christ, from the guidance of the teahcing of the holy Apostles, from the testament of the Holy Fathers, martyrs, and confessors. Terrible sorrows have become indispensable, so that at least by this means our attention might be turned to the great sin of those bearers of the name of Christ who are called to sanctity."

"In case the Soviet authority, against all reason, will continue to stubbornly view Orthodoxy in general as counter-revolutionary—well, what of it? We shall go to Golgotha. But before this the Church must fulfill its duty before the world and in this connection must step forth with an authoritative word of warning to the perishing people. The justice of the world is wavering. The lie has become the law and foundation of human life. The human word has lost every bond with truth, with the Pre-eternal Word; it has lost all right to be trusted and respected. People have lost faith in each other and are drowning in an ocean of insincerity, hypocrisy, and falsity."

"If there had not occurred such a great quenching of the spirit of faith and love among the believers in the preceding period, the faithful servants of the prince of darkness would not have found among us so many voluntary and involuntary helpers for himself."

The long isolation of Bishop Damascene from Soviet life, his remoteness from the gradual process of Sovietization, caused him to be unrealistic about the life around him. In the repressive measures of the Soviet authority, apart from their immediate results, there was hidden a profound meaning. Between the bishops and priests who were languishing in concentration camps and prisons, and the mass of the faithful, no matter how firm they might strive to stand in the faith, there had opened up an abyss of mutual misunderstanding. The confessors strove to lift the faithful to a higher step and to raise their spiritual level to their own. The mass of the faithful, weighed down by the cares of life and family and blinded by propaganda, on the contrary involuntarily went downwards. Visions of a future golden age of satiety, of complete liberty from every outward and inward limitation, of the subjection of the powers of nature to man; deceptive views in which fantasy passed over into science (painless childbirth, direct connection with America through the North Pole, the changing of the climate of the Arctic, harnessing of the sun's rays, etc.)—were used by the Bolsheviks to seize in their nets the overwhelming majority of the people. Only a few individuals could preserve their elevation of spirit.

BISHOP DAMASCENE AND METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

The stay of Bishop Damascene in Starodub was marked by his energetic battle against the new church policy of Metropolitan Sergius which was set forth by him in his Declaration of August 19, 1927. A series of epistles by Bishop Damascene, and in particular his epistle to Metropolitan Sergius in connection with his Declaration, made absolutely clear the reasons for this battle. Summing up briefly their content, one may say that the formal reason for the protest against the Declaration was the fact that Metropolitan Sergius, who was a temporary and not a totally authorized substitute of Metropolitan Peter, exceeded his authority, which he assumed without canonical foundations. By his usurpation of authority Metropolitan Sergius placed in question the canonical legality and efficacy of all the measures which he introduced, beginning with the Declaration.

One thing was certain: Such activity of Metropolitan Sergius, which continued to develop, served for the destruction of the Church and an abasement of its dignity and authority, for the undermining of faith and its work of salvation.

"When I reflect on the activity of Metropolitan Sergius, I recall the words of the epistle written before his death by Metropolitan Benjamin: 'Now we must leave off our learning, our self-opinion, and give place to grace.' On the part of Metropolitan Sergius we see precisely the opposite of this testament of the hieromartyr. He himself closes his eyes to the threatening danger before which our Church has been placed, and he draws others away from a proper preparation of themselves for this danger. Instead of giving expression to the Church's true awareness by which its further course has already been defined and its will has been expressed not to deviate from the path of the Cross given from above, Metropolitan Sergius cowardly hides from the sorrows which are unavoidable in a direct course and gives himself over to the enemies of the Church for the sake of the preservation of outward prosperity, and he draws others onto this same path."

Despite the execution of many bishops, the imprisonment of the Patriarch, the closing of churches, the destruction of monasteries—despite the cruel persecutions and decrease of the number of believers, church life flourished with such a blossoming as it had not known perhaps for several centuries. In all the churches there were formed sisterhoods which served the churches and occupied themselves with charitable works, in particular for the imprisoned clergy; and there were strong church councils that defended the churches. Collections were made for prisoners, there were spiritual concerts, spiritual talks, lectures, all-night prayers. The cathedrals and still-remaining monastery churches in which Divine services were performed according to the typicon were always overflowing. Freed from the outward care of the government, cleansed by persecutions, the Church breathed deeply and fully. It did not fear persecutions; it was not hemmed in by the deprivation of material goods. Believers from their scanty budgets would have found the means for the upkeep not only of the clergy, but also for theological academies, if such had been permitted. The Church became a state within the state, and its spiritual power triumphed. The authority of the clergy, who were in exile and prison, was incomparably greater than it had been in imperial times in different circumstances. The bishop who travelled by hired cab or streetcar, or who even walked on foot, attracted greater respect from the believers than did a bishop travelling in a carriage in imperial times. Usually the believers would wait for their bishop outside in the street, would accompany him to his cab or streetcar, and sometimes to his humble dwelling. If a bishop was in prison, he would receive such a quantity of parcels that he would not only feed his own cell, but would give also to others. There would only have to be a rumor of an expected release from prison, and then before the gates of the prison the faithful would gather, a believing cab man would come from somewhere in the neighborhood and at the necessary moment drive up triumphantly: "Master, bless me to take you home."

But the Soviet authority strove, together with its outward demands, to interfere also with the inward side of the Church, to act upon its spiritual life. It was this attack precisely on the inward life of the Church, under the appearance of a legalization whose dimensions and boundaries it was impossible to foresee but whose aim was clear, that was the reason for a fervent protest, in particular on the part of Bishop Damascene.

"That which you accept under the name of 'legalization' in essence is an act of servitude which does not guarantee for you any rights whatever, but lays on you serious obligations. It was naive to expect anything else. The communist authority is open and logical. It has openly declared itself hostile to religion and has placed as its governmental aim the annihilation of the Church....It will not cease openly and clearly to declare its God-fighting aims both through the higher government officials and through its smallest agents. Therefore it is most naive and even criminal to think that the so-called 'legalization' on the part of the Soviet authority has as even a part of its aim to provide for the good of the Church. And if the aim of a legalization is not good then that means it is evil."

"Has it really not entered your head that the information given by you has nothing whatever in common with the Church's interests? And has the thought not dawned on you that if they were to increase a little these demands of accountability, and if you would fulfill them conscientiously, the believers would turn away from you with disgust as open agents of the security organs, all the more because the authorities themselves are striving to place you precisely in such a light? Reflect especially on the fact that your present legalization, as a part of the plans of an authority that has declared war against the

Church, is a step towards the conversion of all of you into the same kind of submissive servants in the hands of the authorities for the destruction of the Church as are all the renovationists?"

"It seems to us that Metropolitan Sergius wavered in his conviction of the almightiness of the all-conquering Truth, the almightiness of God, in the fatal moment when he signed the Declaration. And this wavering, like a frightful shock, has been transmitted to the whole body of the Church and has caused it to shudder....Innumerable and infinitely heavy are the inward consequences of the Declaration—this selling of the primogeniture of the Truth for the 'lentil soup' of false and unrealizable goods. But apart from the inward shocks, of course it will have other consequences also which are more evident and palpable."

Bishop Damascene evaluates with the greatest mystical depth the inward essence of the Declaration in his essay "The Seal of Christ and the Seal of Antichrist", even though the Declaration itself is not mentioned there.

"Why is it that the seal of Antichrist, as St. John the Theologian affirms, will be placed not upon the forehead and the hand simultaneously, but upon the forehead *or* the hand? Likewise, St. Andrew, Archbishop of Caesarea, writes: 'He will strive so that the mark might be placed upon everyone....In some it will be on the right hand, so as to instruct those who have been deceived to be bold in their deception and darkness. This will occur because at that time there will be people who will affirm that it is possible and permissible to recognize the God-fighting authority of Antichrist if only one remains a Christian in one's soul. From such ones Antichrist will not demand that they share his way of thinking; in other words, upon all such ones he will not place the seal on their forehead, but will demand of them only the recognition of his authority, which is, according to St. Hippolytus, the seal on the hand, since through the recognition of the human authority which will be God-fighting and against God, lawless and filled with every impiety, a Christian by this very fact will cut off from himself every possibility of doing good and righteous deeds, for in his faith there will be missing the chief sign of uprightness—the confession of God as God and the recognition of Him as the Being that stands above all. All such ones, even though they might bear the name of Christian, in very deed will be, according to the works of their hands, true servants of Antichrist, who has deceived them by the worship of his image, which is the mark of the beast. Repentance is impossible for such ones, according to the teaching of the Holy Church; and it is impossible only because the seal of Christ and the seal of Antichrist are incompatible with each other, and the reception of one banishes the presence of the other. The banishing of the grace of the Holy Spirit through the mark of the beast fills the heart of all such ones with the first sign—fearfulness—which will bring them to an easy destruction. St. Hippolytus writes: 'On the contrary, if anyone will be deprived of the Holy Spirit, that is, if one will not have upon himself or has lost the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit which was given in Holy Chrismation, he will fight with fear in a cowardly manner, will hide, will be afraid of the present temporal death, will conceal himself from the sword, will not endure chastisement, since he is constantly thinking about this world.'"

In other words, Orthodoxy and every religion is incompatible with communism, because the one excludes the other. In this Bishop Damascene is in agreement with Metropolitan Cyril.

BISHOP DAMASCENE AND METROPOLITAN PETER

Who, after all, could resolve the question on which path to lead the ship: on the path of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, or that of Metropolitan Sergius? This dispute between the Tikhonites and the Sergianists could be resolved only by Metropolitan Peter, the canonical substitute of the Most Holy Patriarch. A disciplined man who desired not to step away a single inch from the canons, Bishop Damascene dreamed that the voice of Metropolitan Peter might resound through the whole Orthodox Church.

But Metropolitan Peter was in the remote village of Ho in the province of Tobolsk. How could he be reached? If one were to write a letter and send it by mail, at best it would not reach its destination. If one were to go oneself, one would be stopped on the way. One thing remained: to sent to Metropolitan Peter a trustworthy person in order to give him a series of documents which illustrated the situation of the Church and a letter with a request to give his opinion and make a reply in whatever form Metropolitan Peter might consider the most acceptable. This was a project which was extraordinarily difficult to execute! First of all, much money was required.

However, Bishop Damascene had at his disposition a large enough sum of money that he might, without losing time, send a courier. It was already the month of May. Considering the climactic conditions of the place where Metropolitan Peter was staying, one would have to hurry with this matter.

"Our pilgrim already left before I received the parcels. I could not keep him any longer. Pray there that the Lord might bless my undertaking. I have given him a complete picture of the most various material; I have also sent copies of the Sergian decrees and appeals. One can expect a reply only in August" (letter of May 21, 1929).

Later he wrote: "Our pilgrim gave over everything successfully, and has already returned with a reply—for the time being only an oral reply, but a written reply should be received soon. Everything I sent turned out to be completely new there. He could not send a reply immediately for reasons of an entirely outward character. The emissary says that after becoming acquainted, grandfather (the name Bishop Damascene gave to Metropolitan Peter) spoke of the situation and further conclusions from it in almost my own words."

The courier reached with difficulty the distant village where Metropolitan Peter was. One can only imagine how difficult the journey was for him; he was aware that in Soviet conditions he could have been followed on the road and seized, and the matter could have been made to look like a widespread counter-revolutionary organization in the Church with terroristic aims! And when he came to the last train station, how could he get to the little village, which was 120 miles from the railroad, without arousing suspicion from his lack of knowledge of the road? No less difficult was it, once having reached the village, to seek out Metropolitan Peter there. None of the local inhabitants, who were foreigners and summer visitors, supposed that the sick old monk who was taking refuge in the corner of a hut in the midst of a large family, was the chief hierarch of the once-mighty and pompous Orthodox Church.

The emissary found Metropolitan Peter completely ill. It was dangerous, both for the courier and for Metropolitan Peter, for him to remain in the village and wait for a reply; and the careful reading and studying of 22 documents and the making of a decision in accordance with them required time—and strength, which in Metropolitan Peter was already declining.

BISHOP DAMASCENE

It is remarkable that, despite the watchfulness of the security organs of the Soviet authority, the courier of Bishop Damascene still managed to get through unnoticed and brought misfortune neither upon himself nor upon the bishop who sent him.

With ever-increasing tension, Bishop Damascene waited for a reply from Metropolitan Peter. However, in October he wrote: "But what actually am I waiting for? I am coming to the idea that even a decisive word from Metropolitan Peter will not change the situation essentially, for the essence of the great sin which is being performed is not understandable to many. Perhaps it will be correct to leave everyone in a peaceful ignorance of the sin which has been performed....I begin to think that our chief aim must be the inward strengthening of ourselves for bitter trials" (letter of October 5, 1929).

Metropolitan Peter never gave his answer from exile.

Perhaps Metropolitan Peter himself experienced a feeling of hopelessness before the evil which was ever more innundating the land and gave over the guidance of the Russian Orthodox Church into the hands of God, as was done by Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich after his short tenure as substitute of the Locum Tenens.

Bishop Damascene usually wrote his epistles with several copies and sent them to his friends. Each of them was instructed to recopy the letter by hand or on a typewriter with several more copies and to send them to the enclosed addresses. The addresses were to every part of the Soviet Union: Siberia, the Caucasus, the Ukraine, the Urals. This activity of Bishop Damascene was the last spark of his indefatigable energy. Then there was a break and a going over to the underground Church after his final departure from Metropolitan Sergius.

BISHOP DAMASCENE'S CITY OF GOD

In what did this break consist? In a return to the idea by which Bishop Damascene was guided when he was still a hieromonk: by means of a patient and prolonged preaching among persons carefully chosen, in house-churches, solitary cells, and the like, to create a tightly-knit church brotherhood of believers sincerely devoted to the idea of Orthodoxy, a small Church which nevertheless would be the more noticeable on the surface of public life the deeper it sunk its roots into the hearts of the people. At that time this idea had been a kind of foreknowledge of the fulfillment of Vladimir Soloviev's presentiments; but now it was founded on facts.

"Those children of God who have not fallen under the pressure of the satanic hurricane and have not been bruised by the pieces of the great shipwreck, are clearly aware of the situation and with complete calmness and confidence will undertake the building of the true Church of Christ on the foundation of it which still remains, without excessive nervousness, without unnecessary complaints; for the process of its building will comprise the whole meaning of their life....Step forward to this holy undertaking, and immediately you will find peace and clarity of soul, repose and foreknowledge. Remember that the builders of the Church are not only the clergy, but also all the believers, all who strive towards Christ. And our path towards Christ is primarily expressed in this process of building. The process consists in the fact that we offer ourselves as bricks in the holy building of the Church of Christ, which is His Body. If our inward part is composed of the love of Christ, our thoughts and feelings and will are cemented by the grace of Christ. If we will consciously place this brick of ours at the foundation of the Church for further building, then the very Creator of the universe will reveal a place for it, so that no storm can move it or cast it down. In the face of the great destruction which has occurred, it is evident that each of us must begin to raise up the building from its foundation. The example of the first builders will give us definite forms for such work. Think of them, become more acquainted with them in the holy Apostles, the holy martyrs and confessors, and in the writings of the Holy Fathers of that period."

Bishop Damascene turns the thoughts of his friends and venerators to the times of the martyrs and confessors, because after the thousand-year history of Christianity in Russia, the Church has been thrown back to the times before Constantine the Great, to the times of Nero and Diocletian.

"Let us bring our own bricks to the immovable foundation of the righteousness of Christ, of the Divine Truth, of eternal salvation. Without many words, without loud phrases, create first a small nucleus of a few people who are striving towards Christ, who are ready to begin the realization of the evangelical ideal in their lives. Unite yourselves for grace-given guidance around one of the worthy pastors, and let everyone separately and all together prepare themselves for yet greater service to Christ....Just a few people united in such a life already makes up a small Church, the Body of Christ, in which the Spirit and the Love of Christ dwell....If we do not become members of the Body of Christ, the temple of His Life-giving Spirit, then this Spirit will depart from the world, and the frightful convulsions of the dying world organism will be the natural result of this."

Bishop Damascene believed in the victory of Christianity: "Your reflections on the morning and evening of Christianity are incorrect, for they as it were exclude the presence of day. I look otherwise at the situation. The purpose of the Church is a constant battle; this is why it is called the 'militant Church', battling with the prince of this world—that is, with all those who by all possible means and ways press the spirit of man, bind it, as it were mix it with matter, gradually surpress in it the call from heaven, deprive it of the opportunity even to feel its own true nature, the true purpose of its life in this world, and even harden it against the eternal Light. For the spirit that has become attached to earth, this Light even now becomes painfully tormenting, which is why there is occurring a rebellion against the Light, an effort to put out its remaining rays in this world. All this is contained in a single word: evil. As long as there is occurring a conscious battle with these conditions of life in the domain of the prince of this world, a battle with evil, so long will the 'day' of Christ's Church endure....It is joyful to realize that only this Light possesses the life-giving quality of constantly creating, igniting noble lamps of the Light in the midst of the darkness which to all appearances has already covered everything. Therefore, let it be that darkness has temporarily covered the earth (from the sixth to the ninth hour), let it be that the lamps of certain Churches are hidden under bushels so as not to be put out by the satanic whirlwind (as has occurred with the majority). After a short time of rest from the Lord (perhaps even the time when the darkness will imagine that its work has already been completed), the lamps will be revealed, will come together, will ignite a multitude of others which had been put out, will pour together into a great flame of faith which, when efforts are made to put it out, will burn yet brighter; for many which have been put out and have felt the torment of the darkness and the cold of Tartarus will prefer to burn upon the bonfire of the flame of faith than again to be immersed in darkness.

But all this is in one's dreams; what of the Soviet reality at this present moment? "And so, we are a minority.... What is that to us? Does one need to step back before the attack of militant atheism? May this not be! No matter how few we might be, the whole power of Christ's promises concerning the invincibility of the Church remain with us. With us is Christ, the Conqueror of death and hell. The history of Christianity shows us that in all the periods when temptations and heresies have agitated the Church, the bearers of church truth and the expressors of it were few, but these few with the fire of their faith and their zealous standing in the Truth have gradually ignited everyone....The same thing will happen now if we few will fulfill our duty before Christ and His Church to the end."

"The fearless confession of faith and of one's hope and a firm standing in the Church's laws are the most convincing refutation of the Sergian deviation and are an unconquerable obstacle to the hostile powers directed against the Church. *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*"

Already in this period of his life in Starodub, Bishop Damascene gradually was training his friends and followers to the idea that Christianity would be forced to go underground so as to perserve itself in purity and in incorrupted beauty of spirit. The longer he lived in freedom, the more were dispersed his illusions concerning the possibility of influencing the mass of the people which not long before this had been called the "God-bearing" people. But this idea matured completely only in Solovki. After he had returned from imprisonment in Solovki he was a convinced partisan of departure from Metropolitan Sergius and going over to a semi-legal, and later an entirely underground, existence of the Orthodox Church.

THE LATER EXILES OF BISHOP DAMASCENE

In November, 1929, Bishop Damascene was again arrested. This time his prison was Solovki. There Bishop Damascene met many who thought as he did, with whom previously he had only been acquainted by correspondence. Unfortunately, in this period it was very difficult to have correspondence with Bishop Damascene—letters did not arrive, and replies were not received. After he was set free in 1934, Bishop Damascene said almost nothing about his stay in Solovki, except that hunger forced those in Solovki to collect at the seashore all kinds of shellfish and snails to satisfy it to some degree. This was the period of the forced collectivization of agriculture and the terrible famine which was caused by it.

There was one other thing which Bishop Damascene mentioned about his stay in Solovki: To rest from the “bedlam“ surrounding him, he would go off into the forest. There, as other exiles of the same period related, they found him on his knees immersed in deep prayer.

Evidently the experience of life in Starodub and the close contact with the world of the concentration camps (by comparison with which even Poloi seemed paradise), where political prisoners were mixed and sometimes placed under criminals, left a profound imprint on the further thought of Bishop Damascene. He already was turning away from any widespread activity; he no longer wrote long letters, addressed to a broad circle of believers. He became convinced that in the conditions of Soviet reality and the general corruption, only an underground Church was possible. And the chief thing: he saw the mass exodus from religion, the success of anti-religious propaganda, the atheism which was growing right and left. Now it was no longer a majority, but a minority which one could hope to save.

Believers in 1934 were a small flock———these were not the called, but the chosen. One had to think about the welfare of this small flock. Bishop Damascene found his samll flock on his last trip to Kiev. He went about the cities which he knew, visited those who thought as he did, and sought out new ones.

While in Kiev Bishop Damascene called a certain archpriest, a professor of the Kiev Theological Academy, to join his small flock. The archpriest absolutely refused———he would not go into the underground, but would remain in his tiny church....For some reason the refusal of this archpriest caused a great shock to Bishop Damascene. He had a heart attack. Could it really be that up to now—more than six years after the issuance of the Declaration—it was not clear that in place of the “legalization”of the Church it was a *liquidation* of the Church which was going forward with increasing pace? What more was there to hope for?

The friends and venerators of Bishop Damascene tried to keep secret his place of residence. But how could one protect Vladika, who did not take off his rasson, who did not shave his long beard, who after so many years, continued to act like a bishop and would walk about Kiev with his bishop's staff “incognito“ when he was forbidden to show himself in the Ukraine at all! He did not know how to hide himself. He thought thus: “We are all as sheep for the slaughter.“

FOUNDING FATHERS

Even earlier, soon after the publication of Metropolitan Sergius' Declaration, Bishop Damascene had thought about the fate of the Russian Orthodox Church in the image of two of the Churches of the Apocalypse: those of Philadelphia and Laodicea. The Church of Patriarch Tikhon was the Church of Philadelphia: *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ... Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name* (Apoc 3:7-8). *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar of the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God...and My new name* (Apoc. 3:12).

And side by side with the Church of Philadelphia, the Church of Laodicea—that of Metropolitan Sergius: *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodicians write: ...I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich...and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see* (Apoc. 3:14, 18).

Bishop Damascene told his followers, as far as possible, not to work in government service. Whoever can sew, let him work at home. Whoever can occupy himself with some other handicraft, let him so occupy himself with it that he may live a Christian life and flee from evil. *Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly.*"It is better to be satisfied with less and to preserve one's freedom of spirit."

ASCENT TO THE HEAVENLY CITY OF GOD

In the autumn of 1934 Bishop Damascene was arrested again. But what a contrast with the previous years—no parcels, no food, no clothing, no money! No correspondence was allowed. Whoever disappeared behind the gates of the prison was erased from life forever.

Many months later there came rumors that Bishop Damascene at this time was in some collective farm in Kazakhstan and was working as a bookkeeper. Slowly there came further rumors that Bishop Damascene had been transported by various convoys to the north and then again to the south. His beloved spiritual son was with him—Father John Sm., an outstanding priest, a superb preacher, a confessor, who had gone almost out of his mind after his first exile, when he was beaten mercilessly, chiefly on the head. He was unable to walk. Bishop Damascene threw down the sack with his things, gave them to some believer, and took Father John on his shoulders; thus they went to the north. Then news ceased to come at all. The last news was in 1935: in Kazakhstan Bishop Damascene was arrested and was again sent to Siberia. After this—total silence.

After the Ezhov terror in the mid-30's there was a legend spread about the death of Bishop Damascene. He was taken with the usual convoy to the far north. Somewhere on the shore of a great Siberian river in late autumn he was waiting for a ship. At the last minute another priest was brought, dressed in a light cassock—he had been brought in what he had been wearing when arrested. Bishop Damascene took off his own rasson and with the words, "Whoever has two garments, let him give to one who has none," put it on the priest. But his ruined health could not endure the cold, and right there on the ship, on which the convoy was to travel for several days, he died. His body was wrapped up and sent to the deep of the great Siberian river.

But here is another version of the death of Bishop Damascene: He was imprisoned in a Siberian prison. From the common cell he was brought into solitary confinement—without windows, without light. On the floor of this cell, there was frozen water, and the walls were covered with frost. In this cold and darkness, perhaps even without food, Bishop Damascene stayed until his feet were frostbitten and gangrene set in....It is difficult to imagine without horror all the frightful days of the torment, like that of Gethsemene, of Bishop Damascene. In the prison infirmary Bishop Damascene died of this gangrene.

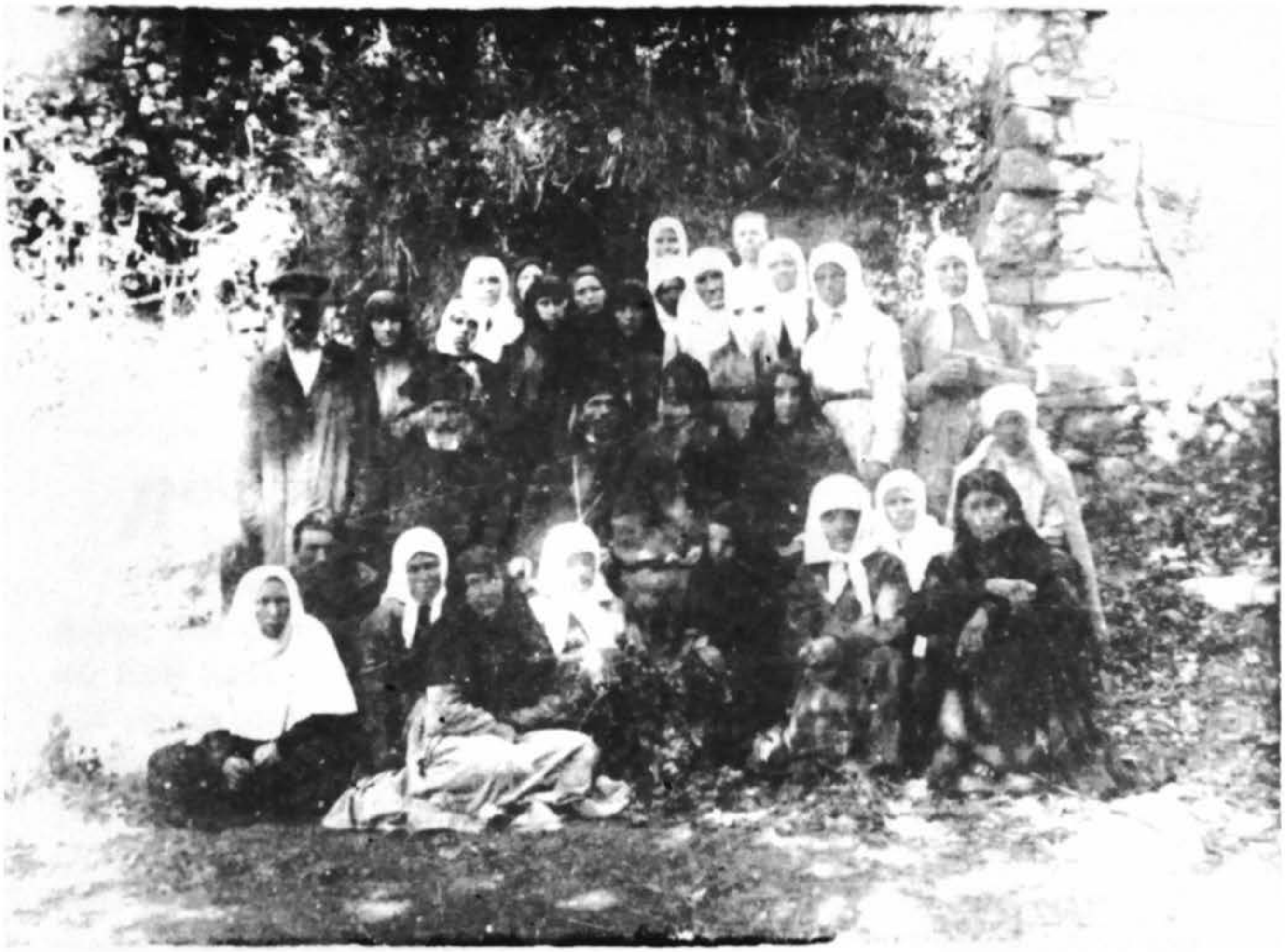
In the 20th century the Russian Orthodox people in their own native land have been present at the raising of their Church upon Golgotha, its crucifixion, its death on the Cross, its placing in the tomb until the bright resurrection, by the will of God. The entire rest of the world that still calls itself Christian passed by the foot of the Cross on which the Russian Orthodox Church was crucified—indifferently, coldly, sometimes even with scoffing, just as the scribes and pharisees passed by. No one stretched out a sponge so as to quench its thirst before death. No one wrapped it in a clean shroud or brought sweet spices. Not a single one of the Eastern Patriarchs did this—those to whom the Russian government had given so bountifully. For them indeed Moscow had been the Third Rome, which supported them morally, materially, and politically.

FOUNDING FATHERS

In Europe the people were unable to understand a simple thing: The tragedy of the Russian Orthodox Church was only the beginning of the tragedy of all Christianity. The attack against Christianity is conducted from two sides, and the pincers are closing in. On the ideological front there is being conducted from underneath the skillful work of the replacement of Christianity by anti-christianity, using Christian and church terms and forms for the greater success of Bolshevik propaganda. For this purpose there was even proclaimed the compatibility of Communism and Christianity.

The Russian Orthodox Church for more than 50 years has borne the cross of confession, and by the prayers of her great confessors of our time the gates of hell will not overcome her. In a short, chance conversation, the Serbian Archbishop Nicholas of Ochrida in connection with the Russian Church has said: "At the present time before the Throne of the Almighty, the voices of Russians are drowning out all the rest!"

Sources: **E. Lopeshanskaya (see Sources)**



Bishop Damascene with Abbess Sophia at his left
and the Irpen group of Catacomb convent (see also p. 348)

Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan when a young Vicar-Bishop in the Petersburg Diocese

15

Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan

THE FIRST LOCUM TENENS OF PATRIARCH TIKHON

Commemorated January 26 (†1937?)

> *The Lord preserved for his chosen people a bishop who did not agree to yield his faith for the sake of peace with the enemies of Christ's Church. May his name be blessed from generation to generation.*
>
> Sergei Nilus

BEFORE HIS DEATH Patriarch Tikhon left a document concerning his temporary successor, the Locum Tenens, who was to occupy the Patriarchal Throne until a new Patriarch could be freely elected for Russia. The Communist program which was being imposed upon much-suffering Holy Russia, and which was not actually atheistic but rather anti-theistic, had already made it extremely unlikely that such a free election could be held. In his choice of three successor hierarchs, the Martyr-Patriarch indicated the path for the Church to follow: these men were above all noted for their strict Orthodoxy of faith and boldness in confessing it, qualities which prepared them to become great confessors such as the Church had in the early catacomb times. The first of these pillars of firmness in unadulterated Orthodoxy was Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, a towering figure in the Russian Church and an inspirer of the Catacomb Church.

Born Constantine Smirnov on April 26, 1863, he graduated from the St. Petersburg Theological Academy in 1887. After marriage he was ordained priest, but soon he became a widower and was tonsured a monk and appointed head of an Orthodox Mission in Urmia. In 1904 he was consecrated Bishop of Gdov, a vicar of the Petersburg diocese, where he became spiritually very close to the great luminary of the 20th century, St. John of Kronstadt. The holy pastor was greatly attached to the young hierarch, and in his last will St. John asked that his funeral be served and that he be buried by none other than the young Bishop Cyril. When the Saint died in 1908, Bishop Cyril fulfilled this request with great love and care, placing the body in the coffin and being the chief celebrant in the funeral services that followed, even though there were many elder hierarchs present. St. John knew well and greatly respected the high spiritual caliber of Bishop Cyril.

During the celebration of Theophany in Petersburg in 1909 Bishop Cyril revealed himself as an outstanding fighter for church truth and tradition. Under the influence of worldly "scientific" elements it was officially decreed that all water which was to be blessed for the feast in the Petersburg diocese must be boiled beforehand, and thus the great Agiasma had to be performed over steaming pots. One outspoken church organ of the time noted that: "More faith was shown in the firewood necessary to boil the water and kill the germs, than in God. Fortunately, however, not everyone stepped away from the anchor of our salvation, and in the same Petersburg the Lord preserved for his chosen ones a single bishop who did not agree to yield his faith for the sake of peace with the enemies of Christ's Church. If these notes ever see the light of print, let them preserve the name of this loyal servant of God and archpastor, for the strengthening of faith and piety in my overburdened brethren. Cyril of Gdov is the name of this bishop. May his name be blessed from generation to generation." Defying the warnings of the police, Bishop Cyril blessed the water of the Neva River at the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra right through a hole in the ice. The local police, however, took measures to ensure that no one was allowed to take water from the "Jordan."

In the same year of 1909, apparently in connection with this incident, Bishop Cyril was transferred to the diocese of Tambov. Here he was entirely responsible for the preparations for the canonization of St. Pitirim of Tambov, which occurred in 1914 with great solemnity in his cathedral. After this he became an archbishop.

At the time of the Revolution he was one of the leading hierarchs of the entire Russian Church, taking an important part in the All-Russian Council of 1917-1918. His report to this Council on "Public Education," which he prepared after dealing with the Provisional Government and talking to

Kerensky himself, revealed the true anti-Christian plans of those who had overthrown the Tsar and hoped to raise future generations without the Church's influence.

When appointed Metropolitan of Kazan he was immediately arrested (in 1919), so that he reached his See only after serving a sentence in prison in 1920. After several months in Kazan he was arrested again for his involvement with the American Relief Organization which supplied food to those who were starving due to the famine caused by the Revolution. In this work Metropolitan Cyril had many devoted helpers, one of whom, the late Abbess Juliana (whose particular duty was to supply food and help to imprisoned bishops), has left an account which illuminates the catacomb circumstances under which the true archpastors of Christ had to tend their flocks at this time:

"In about 1919 Bishop Gurias was arrested; he was prorector [of the Academy] in Kazan when Metropolitan Cyril was rector. Therefore the Metropolitan [who was in Moscow] called me in connection with sending some things to Vladika Gurias. As it turned out, he had agreed with him beforehand as to how the Holy Gifts were to be sent to him in prison. For this he gave me a little box with what seemed to be small white pieces of bread, and he said that these should be registered among the other supplies which were to be given. I was upset at taking the Holy Gifts with me, and in general at the idea of carrying them at all, and I told this to Vladika. To this he answered me: 'What business is that of yours; I am sending you.' But having thought a little, he offered me to take the Holy Gifts from him early in the morning on the same day when I would be going with the packages for Vladika Gurias in the Butyrka prison. This was done. Soon I was going with packages for Vladika Cyril himself, but not for long. In 1920 Metropolitan Cyril was in the Taganka prison. In the same prison at that time, perhaps even in the same cell, were Vladikas Theodore and Gurias. In the Taganka prison the old rules were still in effect: for good behavior prisoners were called or went over to the category of the 'reformed,' and they enjoyed certain privileges. In the Taganka prison there were five prisoners in this category: Metropolitan Cyril, Archbishop Theodore, Bishop Gurias, Alex. Dim. Samarin, and Vladimir Theodorovich Djunkovsky. Besides the usual general visits, they were allowed once a week on a certain day to have visitors with the grating lifted. Usually, at the general visits, when many people were speaking with the prisoners through a double grating, it was almost impossible to converse beacuse of the noise and shouting. Besides that, these meetings lasted only five minutes. On the other hand, visits to the ''reformed'' lasted for fifteen minutes, and one could even give things right into the hands of the prisoners. Under these circumstances I had to speak with and give things to Metropolitan Cyril many times. When the Metropolitan was in exile we were able to help him not only with parcels but also by furnishing church service books.''

At one time, when Metropolitan Cyril was banished to Turokansk, he lived together with Archbishop Athanasius Sakharov in whose biography we find some information on the sufferings of Metropolitan Cyril.

During their common exile, the two archpastors used to pray together. Once, when Bishop Athanasius was placed in solitary confinement and was in great difficulty, Metropolitan Cyril began to pray for him using the prayer rule of the righteous Partheny of Kiev and consecutively reading the Gospels. Suddenly Bishop Athanasius was released. His confinement had been so short that Metropolitan Cyril had not yet finished reading the Gospel of St., John—this they finished reading together.

Bishop Athanasius cherished for the rest of his life the best and the fondest memories of Metropolitan Cyril. He loved to tell stories about him among which were the following:

''In 1924, while Patriarch Tikhon was still alive, Vladika Cyril was returning from exile in the Ziryansk region. He had been summoned to Moscow to appear before the Soviet minister of cults, Eugene Tutchkov, with explicit instructions not to visit anyone on the way. Nevertheless, when Metropolitan Cyril reached Moscow, he went first of all to the Patriarch who had just signed an agreement accepting into communion the Renovationist Krasnitsky. When Metropolitan Cyril asked the reason for his having agreed to such an unorthodox action, Patriarch Tikhon said to him:

''I'm sick at heart that so many archpastors are imprisoned. The authorities promise me to free them if I accept Krasnitsky.''

To this Metropolitan Cyril replied:

''Your Holiness, do not worry about us archpastors. Our only use is in the prisons now.''

On hearing this, the Patriarch crossed out Krasnitsky's name from the recently signed document. Later, in Metropolitan Cyril's meeting with Tutchkov, when the subject of Krasnitsky was discussed, Tutchkov insolently reproached him for not listening to the Patriarch who wanted to accept Krasnitsky.

"I do not understand you," said Vladika Cyril. "Exactly a year ago, on this very spot, you accused me of excessive obedience to the Patriarch, and now you demand just the opposite."

After the death of the Patriarch, there was no possibility of lawfully convening the Sobor (Council) in order to elect a new Patriarch: most of the hierarchs were in prison or in exile. Besides, it was hardly likely that Tutchkov would have allowed them to call a council in any case.

Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky), who was at that time in the Solovki concentration camp, proposed to bring about the election of a new Patriarch by collecting signatures of various archbishops. Together with bishops of like mind who were also in Solovki, he wrote an appeal on this subject to the bishops of the Russian Church. In this appeal he recommended that Vladika Cyril be elected Patriarch. One bishop who was about to be released from Solovki, put this appeal in his suitcase which had a false bottom, and thus it was smuggled out of the camp. Quite a large number of signatures had been collected in favor of Metropolitan Cyril's candidacy. But hardly had this Solovki appeal reached the hands of Metropolitan Sergius, than it became known to the authorities and was immediately suppressed. Those bishops whose signatures appeared on the appeal, paid for it with an increase in their suffering. The initiator of the appeal likewise did not go unpunished. Still sick and barely standing on his feet after a bout with typhus, Archbishop Hilarion was sent under convoy to Leningrad in the fierce cold with only one thin rasson. Having reached his destination, he soon died.

Before Metropolitan Sergius became the "Locum Tenens," Tutchkov offered his position to those hierarchs chosen by Patriarch Tikhon to be his successors, that is, to Metropolitans Agathangelos and Cyril. It was reported that Metropolitan Agathangelos had been forbidden to accept this position by a blessed fool-for-Christ whom he greatly revered, the blind Xenia from the city of Rybinsk. She had told him: "If you accept this, you will lose all that you have previously acquired."

When Tutchkov summoned Metropolitan Cyril, the latter would have agreed to accept the position were it not for the following conditions set by the communist authorities. "If we decide to remove some archbishop," said Tutchkov, "you will be obliged to help us." To this Metropolitan Cyril answered: "If the hierarch is found to have violated a church canon, then yes; but if this is not the case, I shall say to him: Brother, I don't have anything against you, but the Soviet authorities demand of me to remove you and I am compelled to do so." At this

Tutchkov retorted, "No, no, not so. You will have to make believe that you are doing it of your own will, and you will have to find some pretense for his removal." Under such conditions, of course, Vladika Cyril refused to accept the patriarchal throne. It is reported that he then said to Tutchkov:

"Listen, Eugene, you are not a canon, and I'm not a bomb with which you hope to blow up the Russian Church from within."

Metropolitan Cyril was immediately exiled. He was taken to his place of exile in a small boat along the upper Vychegda River. The armed guard who were conducting him did not bother to feed him and only the boatmen out of pity secretly gave the suffering hierarch some bread. When they arrived at their destination Metropolitan Cyril was given over to the care of the owner of a small log cabin. The latter was instructed not to give anything to the Metropolitan. Somehow Vladika Cyril fashioned a fishing rod and managed to provide himself with some fish which he boiled in an old tin can. He was in such a state of agony—both from physical exhaustion and psychological torment—that he burst out in bitter tears when his faithful nun Evdokia, after seeking for him in these wilds, finally managed to reach him and saw him sitting on the shore thus occupied.

Protopresbyter Michael Polsky gives a few words as to the further fate of Metropolitan Cyril: "At the interrogations of the GPU, discussions are conducted on general topics, and religious disputes are even devised. If your understanding and knowledge are discovered, not to mention opinions on the activities of the authorities, you become a definitely harmful individual. Fortunate is he who can pretend to be stupid, unable to reply to anything. Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, during the years of his endless exile, had two weeks of freedom in Moscow itself. The GPU agent demanded of him that he exert influence on the Patriarch either in the question of the reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury or in some other question. I don't remember which. The Metropolitan several times suffered in silence the petty probes of the agent, but finally he said to him: 'Oh, what a smart one you are!' The maddened agent gave Metropolitan Cyril only an hour to get ready. The Metropolitan was sent first to Ust-Syolsk, and then, in the spring of 1925, to some dense forest at which he arrived only after two weeks of travelling in a boat on a river. He was not given anything to eat, he was left to sleep in the cold outside the forest cabins in which the agents themselves lodged; he was dragged by the beard and mocked in such a way that he began to ask death for himself. He spent a year under the rule of a Communist in a forest where there were only two hunting cabins." (*Conditions of the Church in Soviet Russia*, pp. 42-43.)

METROPOLITAN CYRIL

In 1924, when Metropolitan Cyril had refused to join the Living Church, the head of the secret police, Tuchkov, had promised him that he would ''rot in prison''; and indeed, for the rest of his life he went from prison to exile to yet more remote exile. Being in exile in 1925 when Patriarch Tikhon died, he was unable to undertake the responsibilities of Locum Tenens, and this position fell to the Patriarch's third choice, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa. When the latter's Substitute, Metropolitan Sergius, issued his infamous ''Declaration'' in 1927 Metropolitan Cyril was in exile in a remote village in Turukhan in the far north, beyond the Arctic Circle, suffering from a kidney disease. From there he sent outspoken letters both to Metropolitan Sergius and to Bishop Damascene of Glukhov (who was in exile in the same region) breaking off communion with Metropolitan Sergius, declaring his acts null and void, and stating that he had overstepped his authority by instituting a whole new church policy without even consulting the Locum Tenens. Bishop Damascene's secretary at that time, E. Lope, who recently published one such letter, also states that ''in 1931 all the bishops in exile recognized Metropolitan Cyril, and not Metropolitan Sergius, as the head of the Orthodox Church'' *(Bishops-Confessors,* p. 35).

According to information received from the Soviet Union in 1937, Metropolitan Cyril was killed in exile at that time on direct orders from Moscow, at the beginning of the Ezhov purges, as a ''chief inspirer'' of the Catacomb Church.

Sources: Polsky, *The New Martyrs of Russia,* Vol. II, Jordanville, NY, 1957, and *The Condition of the Church in Soviet Russia,* Jerusalem, 1931; *A Pastoral Wreath to Fr. John of Kronstadt,* St. Petersburg, 1911; E. Lope, *Bishops-Confessors,* San Francisco, 1971; manuscript material from Alexei Rostov, Abbess Juliana, Prof. I.M. Andreev; L. Regelson, *The Tragedy of the Russian Church,* Paris, 1977; ''Le Messager,'' No. 107, Paris, 1973; (all in Russian). In English: W. Fletcher, *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground, 1917-1970,* Oxford, 1970.

FOUNDING FATHERS

THE EPISTLES OF METROPOLITAN CYRIL

THE MOST EMINENT of the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church after the death of Patriarch Tikhon was, without doubt, Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan. Chosen by Patriarch Tikhon as the first of the three *Locum Tenens* who would take his place in case of his death or incapacity, he was also chosen by the vast majority (72) of free bishops in 1926 in an unsuccessful attempt to elect a new Patriarch by a secret election. Being in exile in the years after 1925, he was unable to assume the position of *Locum Tenens* which therefore fell to the second candidate of Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa), but his voice was still the most authoritative in the whole Russian Church at that time.

After the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927, therefore, the opinion of Metropolitan Cyril on this document and on Metropolitan Sergius' "new course" of church action was eagerly awaited. This opinion finally came after about two years, from Metropolitan Cyril's exile in Turukhan in the far north. In this letter, to his friend Bishop Damascene, and even more in his subsequent correspondence with Metropolitan Sergius and other bishops up to the year 1934, Metropolitan Cyril sets forth, perhaps more clearly than any of the other hierarchs of the time, the *ecclesiological* nature of the error of Metropolitan Sergius. His observations on the nature of the Church's unity and oneness of mind, on the necessity to reject canonical legalism in the Church, on the question of breaking communion and on the presence or absence of grace in the Moscow Patriarchate and those who have separated from it, remain very relevant for our own day.

METROPOLITAN CYRIL

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EPISTLE NO. 1: June 6/19, 1929

(Addressed to Bishop Damascene Cedrick, who like him had been in exile in Turukhan, but had then been freed and was temporarily in Starodoub. Translated, with omissions, from the complete Russian text in E. Lopeshanskaya, *Bishop-Confessors*, San Francisco, 1971, pp. 27-35. There is a partial Russian text in Lev Regelson, *The Tragedy of the Russian Church*, Paris, YMCA Press, 1977, pp. 166-168, 466-467. Regelson gives the date as May 2/15 and the addressee as the Kazan vicar-bishop Athanasius Malinin; this is an earlier letter whose content is mostly repeated in the longer letter to Bishop Damascene.)

CHRIST IS IN our midst! Beloved brother in the Lord, dear Vladika, Most Eminent Bishop!

Your letter, weighty in content, of March 1 I received on the Apodosis of Pascha. In truth Christ is risen! What you have written to Father John I have read, thanks to the kind attention towards me of my neighbor. Both what you have said to Father John and your letter of March have consoled me — not by their grievous content, but by the oneness of soul and mind of us both which have been revealed there concerning the opinion of the church scandal which is now occurring. . .

Perplexity with regard to Metropolitan Sergius and the church headed by him could have arisen only because the believers have felt in the administrative-ecclesiastical activity of Metropolitan Sergius an exceeding of the authority which was given him by the title of Substitute of the *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne. For me personally there is no doubt that no substitute can be equal in his rights to the one whom he replaces, nor can he take his place. A substitute is assigned for disposing of current affairs, the order of deciding which is precisely defined by the rules in force, by preceding practice, and by the personal directives of the one whom he replaces. No so-to-speak "rights of establishing," as a kind of reform of the existing institutions, the opening of new posts, and so forth, can be given without first asking the agreement and directives of the one being replaced. And a fundamental change of the very system of church administration, which Metropolitan Sergius has ventured on, exceeds the authority even of the *Locum Tenens* himself. . .

(There follows a technical discussion of the institution of *Locum Tenens* under Patriarch Tikhon, in order to show how Metropolitan Sergius has exceeded his authority.)

Therefore, until Metropolitan Sergius abolishes the Synod which he has established, I cannot acknowledge as obligatory for me to fulfill a single one of his administrative-ecclesiastical decrees given with the participation of the so-called Temporary Patriarchal Synod. Such a relationship to Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod I do not understand as a separation from the part of the Orthodox Church administered by Metropolitan Sergius, since the personal sin of Metropolitan Sergius concerning church administration does not do harm to the Orthodox dogmatic teaching observed by this part of the Church also; but I am profoundly grieved that among those bishops who are of one mind with Metropolitan Sergius, in violation of brotherly love, the nickname of "splinter-group" and "schismatics" is already being applied in relation to those who are not in agreement with him and who accuse his wrongness.

I am not separating from anything holy, from anything that authentically belongs to the Church. I fear only to approach and cling to that which I recognize as sinful in its origin, and therefore I refrain from brotherly communion with Metropolitan Sergius and the Archpastors who are one in mind with him, since I have no other means of accusing a sinning brother. The many attempts known to me of personal written brotherly exhortations addressed to Metropolitan Sergius by the reposed Metropolitan Agathangelus, by Metropolitan Joseph and his two vicars, by Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich and Bishop Victor of Vyatka, have not been able to return Metropolitan Sergius to his proper place and to a fitting manner of action. To repeat this attempt of convincing by words would be useless. Therefore, I acknowledge it as a fulfillment of our archpastoral duty for those Archpastors and all who consider the establishment of the so-called "Temporary Patriarchal Synod" as wrong, to refrain from communion with Metropolitan Sergius and those Archpastors who are of one mind with him. By thus refraining, for my part, I am not in the least affirming or suspecting any lack of grace in the sacred actions and Mysteries performed by Sergianists (may the Lord God preserve us all from such a thought!), but I only underline my unwillingness and refusal to participate in the sins of others.

Therefore, I will not liturgize with Metropolitan Sergius and the Archpastors of one mind with him. But in case of mortal danger, with a peaceful conscience I will receive Unction and the final prayers from a priest appointed by Sergius or who submits to the Synod established by him, if there is not present a priest who shares my relation to Metropolitan Sergius and the so-called "Temporary Patriarchal Synod." Similarly, if I find myself in a locality where all the churches are under the "Temporary Patriarchal Synod," I will not enter them to pray at public Divine services, but I acknowledge it as possible, without a preparatory sanctification of the church, to serve Liturgy in one of them either alone or with the participation of clergy and believing laymen one in mind with me, if such ones happen to be there. In my opinion, every clergyman who shares my attitude to Metropolitan Sergius and the Synod established by him can act in the same way.

As for laymen, in all conscience they should not participate actively in the church-parish life of parishes which commemorate the name of Metropolitan Sergius at Divine services as the chief Archpastor. But in itself such a commemoration of the name of Metropolitan Sergius cannot be made the responsibility of laymen and should not serve for them as an obstacle to attending the Divine services and receiving the Holy Gifts in churches which submit to Metropolitan Sergius, if in the given locality there is no Orthodox church which preserves unharmed its canonical relation to the *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne. And to pray for Metropolitan Sergius, together with other Archpastors and Orthodox Christians in general (on lists for commemoration at the Proskomedia, molebens, and so forth) is not a sin. This is the duty of all Orthodox Christians, until a general church excommunication shall declare the abuse made by Metropolitan Sergius of the church authority entrusted to him to be a sin unto death. (Matt. 18:15-17; I John 5:16). . .

At the present time Metropolitan Sergius no longer conceals the insincerity of his declaration that the Synod exists with him and falls with him. In a conversation with you he directly declared: "My future successors will be compelled to take into account the situation which I have established in the Church." But in this declaration there is much more human self-assurance than a God-enlightened understanding of his and the Church's situation. It is comprehensible after this that obedience to Metropolitan Sergius, which holds up only on moral authority, has automatically ceased on the part of all sincere Orthodox people. All such ones have said both in their conscience and in the hearing of others that they preserve communion with the Universal Church through the *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne, but not through his private delegate.

For me personally everything set forth here is a sufficient feeling-out of a canonical foundation under my feet, and an appeal to Metropolitan Sergius with a cumbersome epistle, it seems to me, would be an unnecessary exaggeration of the church significance of Metropolitan Sergius and a pouring of oil upon the fire of self-esteem which is already burning poor Vladika. There has been no lack of brotherly exhortations with regard to him for these two years; but Metropolitan Sergius is deaf to them. He will not listen to a new one, either, even though it might be the call of one older.

Therefore it is sufficient, it seems to me, for the personal representative of the *Locum Tenens*, if everyone who is not in agreement with his church activity should personally bring to his awareness that this activity does not affect us, and we can give no encouragement by our agreement and obedience. One can frankly ask that as long as the so-called "Temporary Patriarchal Synod" exists, Metropolitan Sergius should not trouble to send us his directives, since for them, in our archpastoral conscience, we cannot acknowledge any obligatory significance.

May the Holy Spirit, Who is always in the Church, conduct us through the furnace of the present difficult trials to the greater manifestation of His Truth, lest we in any way decrease in the smallest part of our hope, or become dissolved in thought in this world's evil which surrounds us.

Another epistle of about the same time, which circulated among the episcopate, contains important thoughts on the question of church discipline.

FROM EPISTLE NO. 2: 1929

(Russian text in Regelson, p. 168)

I WILL NOT and do not condemn anyone, but I cannot call anyone to participate in the sins of others, just as I cannot condemn those hierarchs headed by Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovikh) who have confessed their unwillingness to participate in that which their conscience acknowledges as sinful. This confession is reckoned for them as a violation by them of church discipline. But church discipline is capable of preserving its efficacy only as long as it is an actual reflection of the hierarchal conscience of the Catholic Church; and discipline can never itself replace this conscience. As soon as it produces its demands not by force of the indications of this conscience, but by impulses foreign to the Church and insincere, the individual hierarchal conscience unfailingly will stand on the side of the Catholic-hierarchal principle of the Church's existence, which is not at all one and the same thing as outward unity at any cost. Then the instability of church discipline becomes inevitable, as a consequence of sin. And there can be only one way out of sin — repentance and fruits worthy of it. And it seems to me, from my far-away place, that this repentance is equally to be expected from those of Leningrad (i.e., Metropolitan Joseph and those with him) and those of Tashkent (i.e., Sergianist hierarchs) who condemn them. . .

A copy of the first of these letters was sent to Metropolitan Sergius and provoked from him the following reply of September 5/18, 1929 (text in Regelson, p. 469): ". . . Without acknowledging us as either schismatics or as without grace, and consequently having no permissible grounds for a schism, you nonetheless break off communion with us. Can one then agree with you that you are not causing a schism and remain at peace with the Holy Church?

"You have broken off eucharistic communion with us and at the same time do not consider either that you have caused a schism or that we stand outside the Church. Such a theory is entirely unacceptable for church thinking — it is an attempt to keep ice on a hot grill. Of all the visible honds of the church body, eucharistic communion is the most essential, inasmuch as in its absence the remaining bonds of unity do not hold."

Even before this letter, on July 24/August 6, Metropolitan Sergius and his "Synod" had declared the Mysteries of the bishops who had separated from him to be without grace, comparing their "schisms" to the Renovationists. "The Mysteries performed in separation from church unity. . . by the followers of former Metropolitan of Leningrad Joseph (Petrovikh), former Bishop of Gdov Dimitry (Lyubimov), former Bishop of Urazova Alexis (Bui), as also being in a state of interdiction, are likewise invalid, and those who return from these schisms, if they were baptized in schism, are to be received through the Mystery of Holy Chrismation; marriages concluded in schism likewise are to be completed by the church blessing and the reading of the final prayer in the rite of marriage, 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' Those who die in Renovationism and in the indicated schisms may not be given a funeral, even at the great entreaty of relatives, and no memorial Liturgy may be served for them" (Regelson, pp. 168-

9). This action, together with Metropolitan Sergius' letter, evoked a new epistle of Metropolitan Cyril, addressed this time directly to Metropolitan Sergius, wherein he treats specifically the "blasphemies" of denying grace in the Mysteries either of Sergianists or non-Sergianists.

EPISTLE NO. 3: October 28-30/November 10-12, 1929

(Russian text in Regelson, pp. 168-9, 469-71)

CONCERNING THESE BLASPHEMIES I learn for the first time from you. As for my only possible attitude to them you can judge at least by the horror with which "I cast away from myself the idea of the absence of grace in the sacred actions and Mysteries performed by Sergianists." You yourself make note of my horror, and when after this you join me also to the number of such blasphemers, you are simply speaking an untruth. If such blasphemies are actually uttered by anyone, they are the fruit of the personal temperament of the speakers, the fruit—I shall say with your own words—of "the unillumined darkness of some and the loss of spiritual balance of others." And how bitter it is, Vladika, that you also, in an equal degree, reveal the loss of spiritual balance. For your Christian love, which, according to your awareness, has "a certain boldness to believe that the threatening utterance of the Lord (Matt. 12:31 — *Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven)* will not be applied to these unfortunate ones with all strictness," you nonetheless do not dare to find a more loving means of acting on them than the decree of your Synod of July 24 (August 6), 1929, n. 1864, which forbids, in spite of all entreaties, the serving of funerals for those who die alienated from your church administration. Not to mention the re-chrismation of the baptized who have been chrismated with the same Holy Chrism with which the priests obedient to you anoint, or the re-marriages of those already married. In April, in concern over the erring, you busy yourself with the removal of the anathemas of the Council of 1667 (i.e., against the Old Believers), while in August you consolidate the church dispute which has been evoked by your activity and is not yet clear to all, making it an irreconcilable church animosity.

Do not forget that you are creating animosity. . . chiefly against those who, during the existence of Renovationism of various degrees, by their Orthodox feeling, without knowing the written laws, faultlessly determined the authentic church truth and returned to it the shepherds themselves, who were about to waver in their church path as a result of a bookish application of the written canons. In the decree no. 1864 of your Synod I hear a sentence similar to that of the Jewish high priests: *This people that knoweth not the law are accursed* (John 7:49).

This proceeds, of course, from the fact that you and the Synod understand a negative attitude to your activity in church administration to be a denial of the Church Herself, Her Mysteries and all Her holy things. This is why it so amazes you that, while refraining from celebrating Liturgy with you, I nonetheless do not consider either myself or you to be outside the Church. "For church thinking such a theory is completely unacceptable," you declare; "it is an attempt to keep ice on a hot grill." If in this case there is any attempt on my part, it is not to keep ice on a hot grill, but rather to melt away the ice of a dialectical-bookish application of the canons and to preserve the sacredness of their spirit. I refrain from liturgizing with you not because the Mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ would not be actualized at our joint celebration, but because the communion of the Chalice of the Lord would be to both of us for judgment and condemnation, since our inward attitude, disturbed by a different understanding of our church relation to each other, would take away from us the possibility of offering in complete calmness of spirit the mercy of peace, the sacrifice of praise.

Therefore, the whole fullness of my refraining concerns only you and the hierarchs one in mind with you, but not the ordinary clergy, and even less laymen. Among the ordinary clergy there are very few conscious ideologues of your church activity. . .

No matter how much you emphasize the strictness of the judgment of the canons to which you refer in accusing those disobedient to you, your interpretations produce little impression either on those who are disobedient or on the church community as a whole, which is entirely ceasing to trust the dialectical canonics which has developed among us to frightful proportions since the appearance of Renovationism. Remember how, on the basis of canonical literalism, the Renovationist constituent so-called council of 1923 condemned the Patriarch not only to deprivation of rank, but even of monasticism. Therefore, do not misuse the letter of the canonical norms, Vladika, lest we turn the *holy* canons into simple canons. Church life in the last years is composed and actualized not according to the literal meaning of the canons. The very transferral of the Patriarchal rights and obligations to Metropolitan Peter was done in a way unprecedented and unknown to the canons, but the church consciousness accepted this unprecedented way as a means of preserving the wholeness of the Patriarchal order, considering the latter as the chief guarantee of our Orthodox way of life, especially in view of the Renovationist denial of the idea of the Patriarchate.

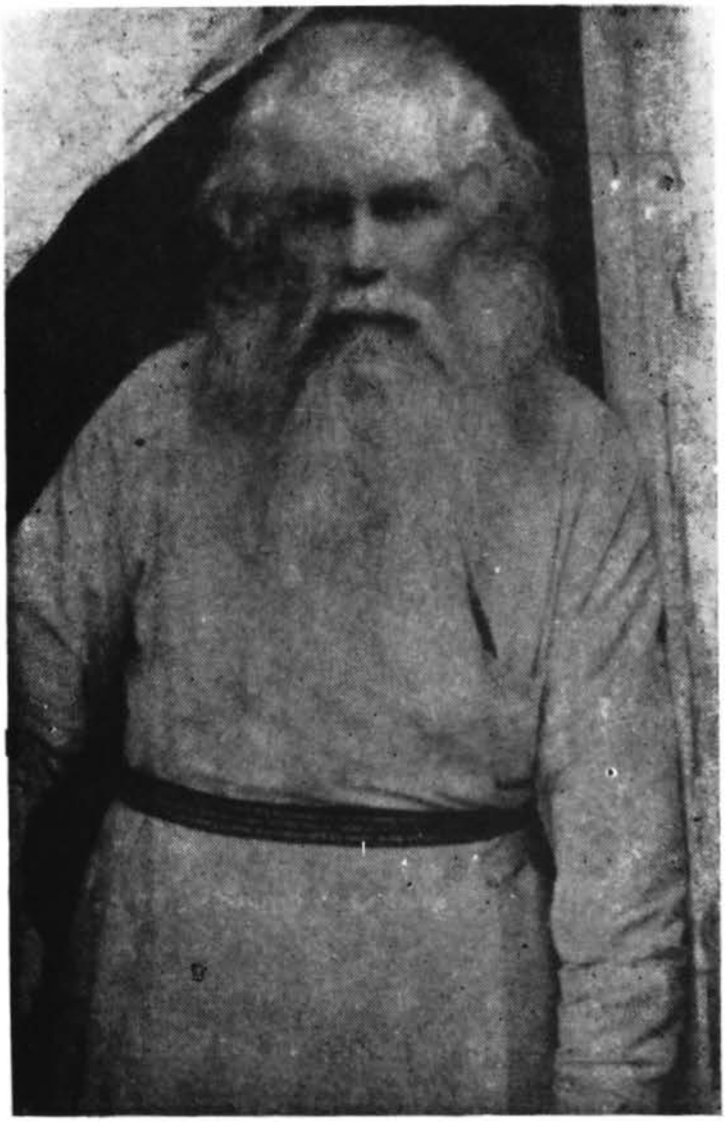
To this letter Metropolitan Sergius replied with an epistle of December 20/January 2, 1930, defending his "rights" as possessing all the authority of a Patriarch himself. Shortly after this letter Metropolitan Sergius and his obedient Synod announced that Metropolitan Cyril had been given over to a church trial and was relieved of the administration of his diocese; unlike Metropolitan Joseph and other more outspoken opponents of Metropolitan Sergius, however, he was not yet totally interdicted or declared to be outside the Church.

Nothing more was done by either hierarch until 1933, when Metropolitan Cyril was given a brief period of freedom (in the city of Gzhatsk) from his exiles and imprisonments. On July 15/28 of that year he addressed a final letter to Metropolitan Sergius, summarizing his own position (Russian text in Regelson, pp. 175-9). It begins thus (referring to the 70th year of his life, which he had just reached):

"Having reached the age which is, according to the word of the holy Psalmist, the beginning of the boudary of earthly human life (Ps. 89:10), standing, so to speak, at the entrance to the grave, I acknowledge my duty to explain to my brethren, the Archpastors, pastors, and believing people, why I consider you a usurper of church authority and refuse to submit to your administrative-ecclesiastical decrees, as well as those of the Synod which you have established. However, *I have no immediate opportunity to bring my confession to the hearing* of the Church, and therefore I am compelled to do this, addressing it to you who brazenly affirm yourself to be the Chief Bishop of the country, perhaps out of sincere error, and, in any case, with the tacit allowance of a part of the brother bishops, who are now guilty together with you of the violation of the canonical good order of the Orthodox Russian Church."

The rest of this epistle details once again Metropolitan Cyril's reasons for refusing to accept the authority which Metropolitan Sergius was claiming for himself in the Church.

During this time of freedom, Metropolitan Cyril actively entered into contact with — and himself encouraged and organized — "non-commemorators" of Metropolitan Sergius, those who commemorated only the name of Metropolitan Peter at Divine services and were now developing a separate church organization, later to be called the "Catacomb Church." In two epistles written before his next arrest in July, 1934, he gives the canonical foundation for his



METROPOLITAN CYRIL OF KAZAN
(Photograph taken in his tent during his exile)

Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa during his exile

Metropolitans Cyril, Anthony, Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Arseny during the 1917-18 All Russian Church Council and the election of the Patriarch activity, which continues to be the canonical foundation to this day not only of the "non-commemorating" Catacomb Church in Russia, but also of the Russian Church Outside of Russia. The decree of Patriarch Tikhon of November 7/20, 1920, which Metropolitan Cyril cites as the specific canonical basis for church organization, states that those cut off from contact with the church center in Moscow should organize themselves as well as possible in their circumstances, choosing the eldest among them as their chief hierarch.

EPISTLE NO. 4: January, 1934

(Russian text in Regelson, pp. 179-181)

Reply to the opinion of a certain one that it was indispensable for Metropolitan Cyril to declare himself *Locum Tenens* until the liberation of Metropolitan Peter.

THE DISORDER in the Russian Orthodox Church I view not as concerning the teaching which She holds, but as concerning administration. The preservation of a fitting order in church administration from the death of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon until the calling of a lawful Church Council is secured by the Testament of His Holiness the Patriarch, which he gave by authority of a special right given only to him, and not to be transmitted to anyone else, to name a Substitute for himself. This Testament is the norm of the administration of the Russian Church until the content of this Testament shall be entirely exhausted. The Hierarch who bears the obligations of the Patriarchal *Locum Tenens* preserves his church authority until the election by a Council of a new Patriarch. If there is a delay in the election of a Patriarch, the *Locum Tenens* remains in his post until death, or his own voluntary renunciation of it, or his removal according to an *ecclesiastical* trial. He has no authority to assign for himself a Substitute with rights identical to his own rights as *Locum Tenens*. He can only have a temporary Substitute for current affairs who acts according to his instructions. It is in this point that the error of Metropolitan Sergius is to be found, since he has recognized himself, in the absence of Metropolitan Peter, to have all his rights as *Locum Tenens*. His sin is in exceeding his authority, and the Orthodox Episcopate should not have acknowledged such an authority, and once being convinced that Metropolitan Sergius is administering the Church without the guidance of Metropolitan Peter, it should have been administered by force of the Patriarchal Ukase of November 7/20, 1920, preparing to give an answer of its activity to Metropolitan Peter or to a Council. If the *Locum Tenens* should die before the calling of a Council, it is essential again to turn to the Patriarchal Testament and to acknowledge as having the rights of the *Locum Tenens* one of the still-living hierarchs indicated in the Patriarchal Testament. If none of these is alive, then the effect of the Testament is ended, and the Church automatically goes over to administration according to the Patriarchal Ukase of November 7/20, 1920, and the common efforts of the Episcopate should bring into realization the calling of a Council for the election of a Patriarch.

Therefore, only after the death of Metropolitan Peter or his lawful removal do I find it not only possible for myself, but even obligatory, to actively interfere in the general church administration of the Russian Church. Until then, the hierarchs who acknowledge as their Chief Hierarch only Metropolitan Peter, commemorating his name in proper order at the Divine services, and not recognizing the administration of Sergius as a lawful succession, can exist parallel to those who recognize Sergius, until a conciliar trial. Those banished from their dioceses should spiritually guide those few who acknowledge them as their Archpastors, and those who have not been banished should guide the spiritual life of the whole diocese, by every means sustaining ties with each other and church unity.

For me personally it is impossible at the present time to step forth, since I am entirely unsure of the character of the attitudes of Metropolitan Peter, in order to be convinced of his actual views and to decide how to act. In any case, I cannot be the Substitute of Metropolitan Peter in correct order without his decree concerning this. But if Metropolitan Peter voluntarily renounces his post of *Locum Tenens*, then by authority of the Testament of His Holiness the Patriarch, and of the promise which I gave him, I will fulfill my duty and take up the weight of the post of *Locum Tenens*, even if Metropolitan Peter might have assigned another successor to himself, for he has no right to make such an assignment.

EPISTLE NO. 5: February, 1934
(Russian text in Regelson, pp. 181-184)
To an unnamed Hierarch

CHRIST IS in our midst! Your Eminence, Most Eminent Master, beloved in the Lord, brother Archbishop!

Your lines filled with condescension and trust towards me, a sinner, have furnished me profound consolation. May the Lord save you! You are distressed by my slowness and what seems to you excessive caution. Forgive me for thus distressing you, and be patient a little longer with me. It is not weariness from long wanderings that calls this forth in me, but an incomplete clarification of the conditions which surround me and all of us. I lack this clarity not for an evaluation of the conditions themselves, but for a fitting understanding of the further conclusions from them which turn out to be unavoidable for those who have made these conditions. The putting of these conclusions into practice will probably not be long in coming, and then the presence of facts will convince everyone of the necessity of definite actions according to the needs of the moment.

But are there really so few such facts in existence? you may ask. Yes, they are not few, but the acceptance of them is refracted in the consciousness of the church community into such a variety of tints that they cannot by any means be pinned down to a single common stem. The necessity for a correcting antidote is acknowledged, but there is no common foundation for it, and Metropolitan Sergius well understands the benefit of such a situation and does not cease to take advantage of it. In one of two letters to me he, not without a certain right, indicates this difference of opinion among those who have addressed reproaches to him, and therefore, of course, he does not take them into consideration. The accusation of heresy, even the most decisive one, is capable only of causing a smile on his lips, as a pleasant pretext to console yet again, by means of his mastery of dialectical canonics, those who keep communion with him in assurance of his total irreproachability in relation to dogma.

However, among them there are not a few who see the erroneousness of many of Metropolitan Sergius' measures, but since they understand in the same way he does the source and degree of the authority which he has appropriated, they condescendingly endure this erroneousness as merely a kind of enticement by power, and not as a criminal appropriation of it. Reproaching him with failing to oppose, and consequently of belonging to, a heresy, we risk depriving them of the psychological possibility of re-uniting with us and losing them forever for Orthodoxy. After all, to acknowledge belonging to a heresy is much more difficult than to acknowledge the incorrectness of one's understanding of the outward order of church life. It is necessary that for such ones of noble soul also, the authoritative utterances of Metropolitan Sergius should be explained as his personal invention, and not as a right that is based on the Testament of His Holiness the Patriarch. Everyone must realize that this Testament in no way applies to Metropolitan Sergius and those like him.

Only those three persons mentioned in the Testament could accept the Patriarchal rights and obligations, and only to these three personally belongs the right to step forth as a temporary church center until the election of a new Patriarch. But they cannot entirely give over this right to anyone of their own choice, because the Patriarch's Testament is a document of quite exceptional origin, bound up by conciliar sanction only with the person of our first Patriarch. Therefore, with the death of all three candidates indicated in the Testament, the Testament of Patriarch Tikhon loses its validity, and church administration is to be established on the foundation of the Ukase of November 7/20, 1920. One must also be guided by this Ukase in case of the temporary impossibility of having contact with the person who bears the dignity of the church center by power of the Testament. This is what should hold also at the historical moment which the Church is now going through.

The different understanding of the Patriarchal Testament which is affirmed by Metropolitan Sergius has already led to the fact that the Testament which was left for securing the speedy election of a new Patriarch has become the foundation of the substitution for the person of a Patriarch in the church administration by some kind of collegial "Patriarchate." Whether the blessing of God rests on this undertaking of Metropolitan Sergius we do not dare to judge until a lawful Council by its sentence shall utter the judgment of the Holy Spirit concerning him. However, just as with everything akin to Renovationism, we cannot acknowledge the church administration which has been renovated by Metropolitan Sergius as our Orthodox administration coming by right of succession from His Holiness, Patriarch Tikhon. And therefore, remaining in canonical unity with Metropolitan Peter, the Patriarchal *Locum Tenens*, under the present impossibility of contact with him, we acknowledge as the only legitimate thing the organization of the church administration on the foundation of the Patriarchal Ukase of November 7/20, 1920.

I firmly believe that the Orthodox Episcopate, with brotherly union and mutual support, will preserve the Russian Church, with God's help, in age-old Orthodoxy all the time of the validity of the Patriarchal Testament, and will conduct it to a lawful Council. . .

It seems to me that both you yourself and your correspondent do not distinguish those actions of Metropolitan Sergius and his partisans which are performed by them in proper order by power of those grace- given rights received through the mystery of the priesthood, from those other activities which are performed with an exceeding of their sacramental rights and according to human cunning, as a means of protecting and supporting their self-invented rights in the Church. Such are the actions of Bishop Zacharius and Priest Patapov of which you speak. These are sacramental acts only in form, while in essence they are a usurpation of sacramental activity, and therefore are blasphemous, without grace, non-ecclesiastical. But the Mysteries performed by Sergianists who are correctly ordained and not prohibited to serve as priests, are undoubtedly saving Mysteries for those who receive them with faith, in simplicity, without deliberations and doubts concerning their efficacy, and who do not even suspect anything incorrect in the Sergianist order of the Church. But at the same time they serve for judgment and condemnation for the very performers of them and for those who approach them well understanding the untruth that exists in Sergianism, and by their lack of opposition to it reveal a criminal indifference towards the mocking of the Church. This is why it is essential for an Orthodox Bishop or priest to refrain from communion with Sergianists in prayer. The same thing is essential for laymen who have a conscious attitude to all the details of church life.

CONCLUSION

The epistles of Metropolitan Cyril that have come down to us all deal with one and the same question: the canonical position of Metropolitan Sergius in the Russian Orthodox Church. But their significance goes far beyond any mere question of canonical "correctness" or "incorrectness." The canons were made to bring order among Christians, not to force them into a strait-jacket of legalism, and thus the epistles of Metropolitan Cyril, which are full of this awareness, are a guide to us in the difficulties and often unprecedented canonical conditions of 20th-century Orthodoxy. The apostasy of our times, to a degree unique in Christian history, is proceeding not primarily by false teachings or canonical deviations, but rather by a *false understanding of Orthodoxy* on the part of those who may even be perfectly Orthodox in their dogmatic teaching and canonical situation. *A correct "Orthodoxy" deprived of the spirit of true Christianity* — this is the meaning of Sergianism, and it cannot be fought by calling it a "heresy," which it is not, nor by detailing its canonical irregularities, which are only incidental to something much more important.

Unfortunately, few seem to be able to understand this in our day of deceptive over-simplifications. Metropolitan Sergius himself, despite his theological reputation, could make no sense of Metropolitan Cyril's position, which is nothing but the balanced "royal path" of Orthodox moderation, between the extremes of Renovationism and Sergianist legalism on the one hand, and a too-hasty accusation of Sergianist heresy or lack of grace on the other. Metropolitan Cyril's position is all the more important in that the situation in the 20th-century Greek Church has been very similar to that of the Russian Church: the Calendar reform also was not a question either of heresy or (primarily) of canonical transgressions, and the denial of grace in the Mysteries either of new-calendarists or old-calendarists has only served to increase the spirit of factionalism and to hinder any possible reconciliation of those who stand in the tradition and those who have followed the reformers thus far against their will. Metropolitan Cyril took up the organization of a separate church organization only with great reluctance, and he did so not because he believed that he and his followers alone constituted the true Church, but solely in order to avoid dependence on those whose confession of Orthodoxy had been compromised, even though they were still part of the same Church. The position today of the Russian Church Outside of Russia with regard to the other Russian jurisdictions is identical to that of Metropolitan Cyril with regard to the Sergianist Synod, and her relation to the other Orthodox Churches of the free world is heading in the same direction, although communion with them has not yet been formally broken. Metropolitan Cyril's message of moderation is thus still very applicable in our own day.

Metropolitan Cyril's important distinction between the true Mysteries of Sergianist clergy, and the "usurpation of sacramental activity" manifested in such acts as Metropolitan Sergius' interdictions and excommunications of those who disagreed with his "new church policy," is likewise a fundamental one for our time. The "bookish" application of the canons, which Metropolitan Cyril so severly condemns, cannot understand this distinction; and thus some people can find themselves in a position which may be "legally correct" but is at the same time profoundly un-Christian — as if the Christian conscience is compelled to obey *any* command of the church authorities, as long as these authorities are properly "canonical." This blind concept of obedience for its own sake is one of the chief causes for the success of Sergianism in our century — both within and outside the Moscow Patriarchate. *Of course* the Christian conscience does not accept the excommunications of a church authority made under political or other non-ecclesiastical pressure (whether from the Turkish Sultan upon the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the 19th century, or the Communist authorities upon the Moscow Patriarchate in our own century), but it is a kind of ecclesiastical legalism to draw from this the conclusion that all the Mysteries of such a church authority are thereby without grace.

METROPOLITAN CYRIL

The epistles of Metropolitan Cyril present, perhaps as clearly as it can be stated, the truth that the law and teaching of the Church of Christ can never be a matter of merely soulless "obedience." The Catacomb Church inside Russia to this day (to the best of our knowledge), together with the free Russian Church Outside of Russia have not denied the Mysteries of the Moscow Patriarchate, but they hold no communion with it; thus they have no part in the un-Christian acts performed in the name of "Orthodoxy" by the Moscow leadership under Communist pressure, but they are also not deprived of solidarity with a confessor within the Moscow Patriarchate such as Father Dimitri Dudko, with whom full canonical communion is impossible only because of his politically-dominated leadership.

Finally, Metropolitan Cyril's emphasis on the *oneness of mind* of those travelling the path of true Orthodoxy shows us our own path today. The leaders of "world Orthodoxy" are pursuing a ruinous policy of renovationism and apostasy, but it is a hazardous and self-defeating thing to attempt to define the precise point beyond which they, and especially their unwitting followers, will have left Orthodoxy without hope of return. This judgment is not ours to make. But to us is given to stand firm in the true tradition of Orthodoxy handed down to us by our Fathers, to refrain from communion with those who participate in the apostasy from true Christianity, and to seek out those of like mind who are resolved to be faithful to Orthodoxy to the death. On such a foundation the Catacomb Church remains firm to this day in Soviet Russia, awaiting the day when it can freely and openly give its testimony of faithfulness to Christ.

16

Archbishop Barlaam

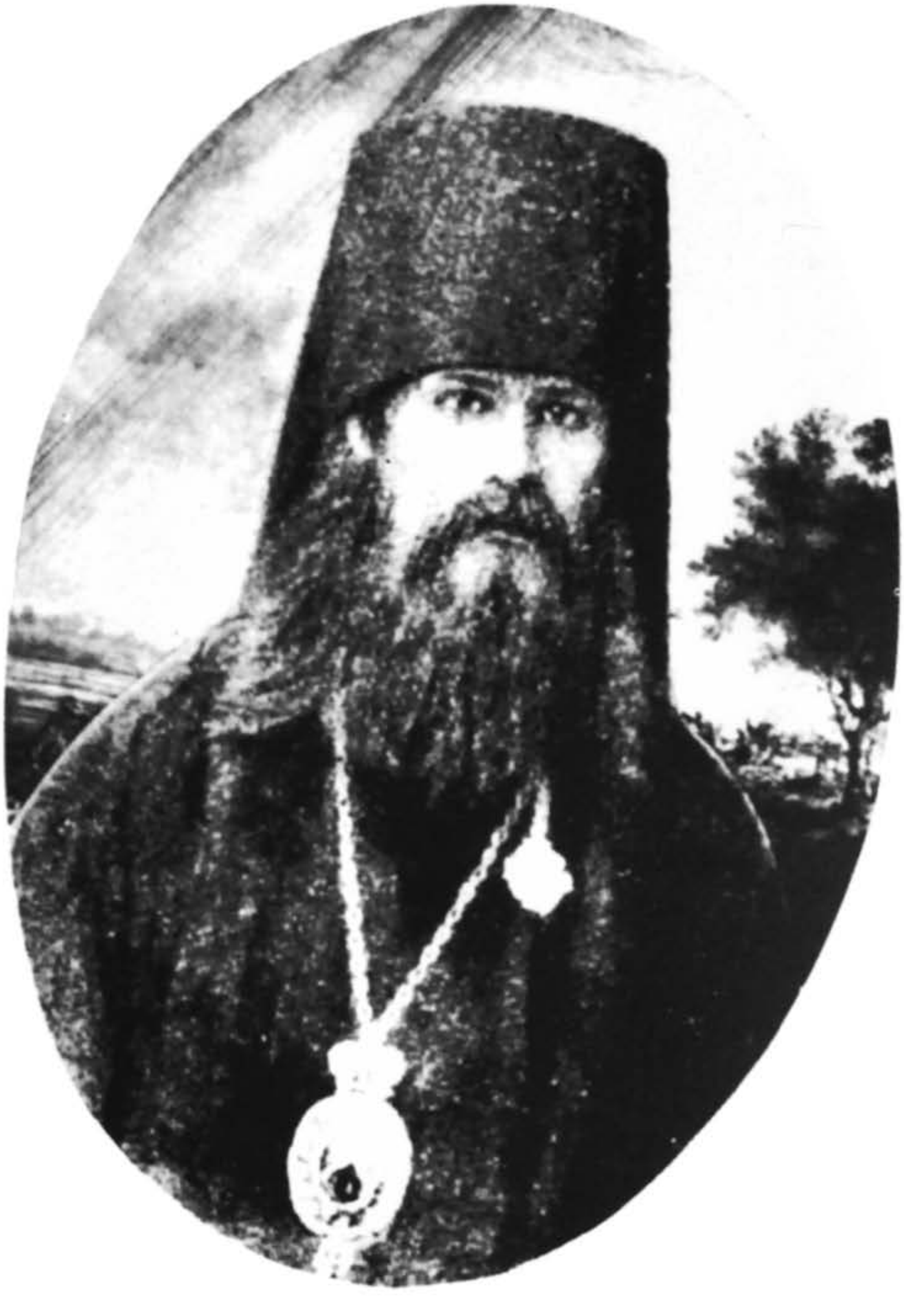
HIS BROTHER-BISHOP HERMAN, AND THEIR LETTERS

Commemorated June 8 (†1942)

> *Glory to the limitless mercy of God. Life is a struggle and suffering for the sake of the ultimate good and the Lord. The more we suffer with humility, the more we become purified and become transcendent in spirit.*
>
> Archbishop Barlaam

He was not dead yet, in the horrible Vologda prison. Archbishop Barlaam, that outstanding hierarch and sorrower over the Russian land, was to starve to death in the winter of 1942. Stripped of his episcopal and priestly and even human dignity, absolutely abandoned, without any essentials for sustaining his life, and virtually paralyzed (due to a severe case of varicose veins), he was left there to die as an "enemy of the people." Both he and all the people knew full well who the earthly enemy of the human race was—the godless authority which, like a parasite, had usurped power and was ruthlessly exterminating human dignity and holiness in much-suffering Holy Russia. And here, on a dirty straw cot, barely covered with some rags full of already frozen insects, lay a holy man. The howling wind outside, with gusts of rain and snow, was already singing his funeral hymns, loudly resounding in the prison walls or echoing the faintly audible shrieks and cries of tortured and executed men, who according to Lenin's system had to be "exterminated like insects" so as to give way to a new breed: the communist class in the "classless society."

In total, grave silence he lay there in his loneliness for a long, long time, apprehending the solemn mystery of human suffering in this "vale of tears," our earthly domain, listening to the pulse of his life, which soon, like



Archbishop Barlaam

Bishop Herman

the dying echoes of the death pangs of his brethren, would come to an end... And only the seemingly-warm, soft blanket of falling snow, covering the bloody deeds of evil men, concealed all that was harsh and evil and reflected in its whiteness the purity of the age to come.

I.

1878—1913

Tambov, an old patriarchal province in the heart of Holy Russia, was the home of two outstanding brother-bishops, whose significance lies not only in the fact that they gave their lives as confessors of Christ, but also in their patristic teaching concerning suffering as a sure means of acquiring purification, self-knowledge, and deification. In a time of historic and abrupt change, when an anti-Christian, materialistic philosophy was universally propagated as the only truth, allowing no room for Christianity even as a minority view, many people found themselves on the brink of despair. Then such soul-consoling teachers as these brothers, well-grounded in patristic knowledge of the human soul and its spiritual laws, rendered indispensable help in coping with the bleak reality of Soviet daily life, so hostile and unnatural to the thousand-year-old experience of Holy Russia.

The future hierarch Barlaam was born on June 8, 1878, in the well-to-do pious merchant-class family of Stephen Riashentsev, and was named Victor at baptism. In 1896 he graduated from the Tambov Classical Gymnasium and entered Kazan Theological Academy, while his younger brother Nicholas, the future bishop Herman, evidently under his brother's influence, went right away into the local Tambov Theological Seminary and upon graduation in 1902 followed his brother also to the same Kazan Academy.

When Victor arrived at the Academy its rector, Anthony Khrapovitsky, had just been consecrated bishop, and the school atmosphere was then at its best . All students lived a full life of theological and ascetic inspiration. All had oneness of mind, dominated by the enthusiastic rector, who was both a dynamic missionary educator and an intellectual who kept abreast of the currents of the times. The heart of this academic family was the monastically-oriented church services in the chapel, where often occurred the monastic tonsure of students who wished to dedicate their life to service in the holy Orthodox Church.

METROPOLITAN AGATHANGELUS

Died of his sufferings in October, 1928

Victor at once immersed himself in this torrent of activity, and became indispensable as an altar acolyte. Their spiritual director, a disciple of Optina Elder Ambrose, was Schema-archimandrite Gabriel from the nearby Seven-Lakes Monastery of the Theotokos. Guileless and childlike, this elder was a profound seer to whom the future was revealed; in his formative years he was bedridden for a long time, something that gave him ample opportunity to practice the Jesus Prayer and acquire from it considerable experience. He was quite open about this, and his attractive and loving personality only sealed for life the bond of the spiritual father-son relationship with those who were fortunate enough to know him. He continued to keep close contact with all his spiritual sons until his repose in 1915. One of Victor's classmates, the future hieromartyr Archimandrite Symeon, composed the elder's biography, a wonderful book of literary merit, drawing a vivid picture of a holy man totally immersed in God. Another classmate of his was the future Archbishop of Chernigov, Pachomius.

The rector, young Bishop Anthony, the future first patriarchal candidate of 1918 and first Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, left on Victor a deep impression. At first his duty was serving in the altar during the Divine Liturgy, standing with the bishop's staff, deeply engrossed in the meaning of the services as God's grace descending upon life on earth. In 1900 he graduated, and the next year, on October 8th, he was tonsured a monk by his rector, being led to tonsure by his elder Gabriel. The very next day he was made a deacon, and the following day a priest-monk. He was given the name of Barlaam, the ancient saint who converted the prince of India, Ioasaph, and inspired him to become a monk.

The new monk was very close to his rector-bishop, and when in 1903 the latter was transferred to become bishop of Ufa, he took his young disciple with him and made him Inspector of the Ufa Seminary, entrusting him with all the old-believer churches that had just joined the Orthodox Church. That must have been quite a task, considering the unpredictability of people of that orientation, with their passion for "correctness."

Bishop Anthony was first of all a fearless defender of the Church, an apologist aggressive in his approach, direct in his statements, loving, quick, and charming. He longed to see the revival of patriarchal church government, and was enthused by the Byzantine roots of Russian civilization,

different from those of the West; yet he remained himself a true man of his century.

His young disciple, Barlaam, on the other hand, while following in his footsteps, was distinguished by his carefulness in action and gentleness in dealing with people, something that earned him great respect from his colleagues, as well as the students. In 1906, already an Archimandrite, he was made rector of Poltava Seminary, where he published his apologetic works—among others, "Faith and the Cause of Unbelief," "The Christian Upbringing of Children," "Work as Life," a work against Theosophy, etc. The whole intent of his teaching was to draw his listeners and readers to the otherworldliness of Christianity. Here is an example of his sermons; it was published in 1911 in the periodical *The Russian Monk* (March, no. 6), on his favorite subject: seeking the City on high:

WE HAVE NO CONTINUING CITY, BUT WE SEEK ONE TO COME

Heaven is our true homeland, eternal, holy, safe from all enemies, from every destroying act of the elements, which themselves will be burned and destroyed (II Peter 3:10). No foe will come near to heaven: fire will not devour it, as often happens with our earthly settlements; water will not inundate it; it is not subject to destruction as is everything on earth, but it stands unshaken for endless ages (Heb. 12:28). No poor or rich are there, because there will be no one there eaten up by greed for wealth; there are no sickness, sorrow, or sighing, but an eternal blessed state, eternal joy; **everlasting joy shall be upon their heads,** *says the Prophet Isaiah, foreseeing by the Spirit of God the blessedness of the righteous (Is. 51:11).*

Fathers and brethren in the Lord! Let us strive towards the mansions above by means of a virtuous life, **so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ** *(II Peter 1:11).*

No man with a hard heart, or one who serves his sinful passious, will ascend into the Kingdom of Heaven. How can one ascend to heaven if for his whole life he has served worldly vanity, if he has been daily languishing in a burning thirst for earthly pleasures or has given his heart over to them and *attached himself to them as a magnet to iron, while he has not developed the slightest taste for spiritual and heavenly good things? (I say not that he has failed to strengthen it, but that he does not have it at all.) Just conduct such a one, if only for an example—if such a thing were permitted—into the mansions on high, and he will be bored there, because there are not there such things as are here below: there are none of his favorite objects, none of the earthly treasures by means of which he lullabied and fooled his heart. The dispositions and inclinations of soul which have been acquired here go over with us into that world, and what torment will be there beyond the grave for everyone who died with his sinful earthly inclinations, who always choked and suffocated the heavenly needs of his soul without succeeding in offering heartfelt repentance for them? This is why there will be an undying worm there, as our Saviour so often says in the Gospel: this worm is our sinful inclinations, living and not dying even after death, which can be satisfied by nothing. But to this undying worm will be joined also an unquenchable fire, a most fierce fire; for it is said:* Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched *(Matt. 9:44, 46, 48).*

And so, if we hope for the heavenly kingdom, for the sake of which we have left the world and settled in the wilderness, we must also acquire a heavenly way of life; if we sincerely desire to live after death in heaven, we must live in a heavenly way on earth.

The heavenly kingdom is opened, the righteous Judge awaits our conversion to Him, He mercifully calls us to Himself, shows us already the mansions prepared for all who love Him and strive towards Him, and says: Come unto Me, all ye that labor, and I will give you rest *(Matt. 11:27).*

Here everything is temporary, but there, eternal; Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come *(Heb. 13:14). Amen.*

II.

1913—1927

In 1913, on January 13, he was made a vicar bishop of Gomel. His vicariate was in the south, in the shadow, so to speak, of the famed Pochaev Lavra. The consecration took place in Petersburg, in the Holy Trinity Cathedral of the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra. At the solemn moment when the bishop-elect delivers his first sermon, after which he is to be consecrated, he uttered the following words:

Your Holiness, Divinely-wise archpastors and fathers!

The will of God, through your holiness, calls me, a sinner, to the highest service in the Church of Christ—the service of bishop. I do not know what to utter and what to say in this fearful hour. One thing I will not hide: the height of this truly apostolic service, and the greatness of the responsibility before God for each soul of the pastors and flock fill my heart with great disturbance and fear, and I stand as if without any answer. I know my spiritual infirmities, I see my spiritual disorder, but I also know that the Lord often calls without looking upon the worth of a man. He chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and. . .the weak things. . .to confound the things which are mighty, and. . .things which are not, to bring to nought things that are *(I Cor. 1:27-28). Out of a persecutor He made for Himself the first of the Apostles. Therefore I humble myself, and in my unworthiness I submit to the call of God: may the will of God be done also in my humility. I follow it with fear, but also with readiness, for I believe that the Lord arranges everything for our good, seeking our salvation; with fear, but also with readiness, I take upon myself the struggle and the Cross which are inseparably bound with the service of bishop.*

This struggle consists first of all in renouncing one's private life. A bishop must separate himself from his own interests and cares for himself. He must live not for himself, but for his flock; he must receive into his soul and his attitude the souls and attitudes of his flock with all their infirmities, sorrows, and sufferings; upon his own shoulders he must as it were raise up the crosses of all and in himself experience for everyone the tormenting battle of good with evil: weep over the falls, restore the fallen, be (in the expression of the Apostle Paul) in the travail of spiritual birth (Gal. 4:19), being weak and burning for every Christian soul (II Cor. 11:29).

But in order to renounce one's personal life, one must die to self-love, die also to the passions, for both of these separate us from Christ and from our neighbors; one must be filled with the attitude that was in Paul when he said: To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain *(Phil. 1:21).*

This struggle is inexpressibly difficult for a sinful man, but it is essential. Otherwise there would be no fruit in pastoral activity; otherwise the pastor himself will be a hireling and will hear the voice of condemnation *from Him Who laid down His life for the sheep and called His followers to do the same.*

To this inward struggle of a pastor there is always joined an outward one, consisting of the difficult outward situation of pastoral activity. The world and the devil rise up against the servants of Christ, and from this come every kind of slander, offense, vexation, and even persecution. If even a simple pastor often grows faint under this cross, what must an archpastor suffer? Who can describe his torments of soul, and his frequent tears, seen and unseen? Moreover, terrible times have now come: many go away from the Faith, rise up against Christ and His Holy Church. Now, when many speak evil of the path of truth (II Peter 2:2), a pastor can no longer be silent and endure sorrows in silence; he must defend the truth and boldly testify of it, he must be a kind of confessor. And to be a confessor means to be a priest-martyr. This is precisely the path of a bishop.

Again I remember the divine Paul, who describes thus his confessor's path: For Christ and His work, he says, I was in wounds above measure, was often in prison and near death; many times I was in danger from my fellow-countrymen, from the heathen, from false brethren; many times I was in labors and weariness, often in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness—all while in ceaseless care for the churches, in the daily pressure of many brethren (II Cor. 11:23-28).

What faith and hope one must have in God, what purity of personal life, what renunciation of oneself and love for the flock, in order to endure in a fitting way this struggle: to fearlessly declare the truth of Christ, to endure sorrows and sufferings with joy, not to lose courage even in persecutions, to burn with zeal according to God, seeking the salvation of one's brethren! Finally, what good sense and experience one must have to guide safely the ship of the Church into the harbor of salvation! The bishop is the pilot of the ship.

A true pilot, *says St. John of the Ladder,* is one who has received from God and through his own struggles such spiritual strength that he can save the ship of the soul not only from violent storms, but even from the abyss itself *(Homily to Pastors, ch. 1:2).*

Again, I acknowledge my infirmity and I see all my unworthiness, but all the same, with humility, I submit to the will of God and banish despon-

dency from myself, for it is God which worketh in us *(Phil. 2:13), and the pastor is not alone; with him and through him the almighty grace of God works, healing the infirm and making up what is lacking.* God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of chastity *(II Tim. 1:17).*

It is in this grace that I have hope; I have hope also in your holy prayers. Pray, O hierarchs of God, that the Holy Spirit might cleanse every defilement of my soul, that He might grant me wisdom and power to shepherd well the flock of Christ to the glory of God and for the salvation of the Church's children, that I also might be vouchsafed at the Last Judgment to stand at His right hand and hear that unutterable voice calling the faithful to the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

Hardly had he begun his archpastoral activity when the First World War broke out, with sorrowful consequences especially for the south, which became the war front. However, prior to this, his participation in the missionary activity of the Pochaev Lavra was the happiest time in his whole life as a bishop. The Lavra of St. Job had just seen a great spiritual revival due to the printing Brotherhood within it, headed by another of his classmates—Archimandrite Vitaly (later of Jordanville, N.Y.). With his apostolic zeal, Father Vitaly stirred up the local people, who for years had been forced to be Uniates, and led thousands of them into the Orthodox Church. Bishop Barlaam took an active part in this truly Orthodox phenomenon and used to lead huge crowds of pilgrims to the Pochaev festivities, delivering flaming sermons calling the Orthodox people to be genuine Christians striving during their earthly life towards the heavenly homeland. Stirring indeed were the moments when a crowd of a thousand or more pilgrims spent all-night vigils on the monastery grounds, singing hymns with one heart and soul either before the Pochaev icon of the Theotokos or to St. Job, or a special "Vitalian" Our Father, while enormous slide projections were shown on the walls of the Cathedral, illuminating the glorious Orthodox past of the Lavra and the whole of Holy Russia as a bastion of pure, unadulterated Christianity. One Bishop, Seraphim, walked to these Pochaev festivities with his whole flock in a procession with banners for a hundred miles—such was the fervor of the Orthodox people then. The whole of Russian monasticism at that time was on a very high level; many monasteries had saints within their walls, and the monastics, inspired by Egyptian and Athonite ascetic practices, treasured the coenobitic discipline for the sake of mystical experience, quite unlike the political orientation of the bickering Orders of the West.

But the Revolution was not far behind. It stormed across the nation like some nightmarish whirlwind. Bishop Barlaam knew well the significance of what was going on in Russia; the satanic nature of the uprooting of Christianity was apparent. The very system of utilizing spying and lies and the reign of terror, at first by the GPU and then the NKVD, was undeniably patterned after the activity of the demonic powers, which exist in a slavish hierarchy of domination and subordination, as is revealed in patristic literature (see, for example, the revelation of the Fallen Theophilus in the Lives of Saints). Lenin's blasphemous plan to change humanity by destroying the dignity of man as the image of God was clear enough, and it was effective on many who were not rooted in patristic wisdom. He understood that what was going on was a spiritual and not only a political change in Russia. This is where the White Army failed, not recognizing this sufficiently. Wherever he could, he spoke out, but concentrated mostly on mobilizing the spiritual powers of himself and those of like mind, growing in the wisdom of humility.

From September 3, 1923, Bishop Barlaam was placed in Pskov, a town dear to him because of his brother, the future Bishop Herman, who after completing the Kazan Academy in 1906 became administratively involved in the Pskov Seminary. The town also reminded them of their mutual elder from Kazan, Father Gabriel, who spent his last years in the St. Eleazar Monastery near Pskov. But Elder Gabriel did go to die in Kazan amidst his beloved spiritual children, and Herman went there to take part in his burial.

Herman's life was not much different from his brother's. Before the Revolution he was rector of the Vladimir Seminary and then was transferred to the Bethany Seminary in the vicinity of St. Sergius' Lavra and the Moscow Theological Academy. There he was in contact with local saints, men of high spiritual striving, and he remembered this whole region of the vanishing Holy Russia years later in the remote northern plains of Siberia with warm feelings and tears—as if the Bethany Seminary had been Paradise for him.

In the winter of 1924 Bishop Herman was arrested and exiled to Tobolsk, and then followed a perpetual way of the Cross, by way of concentration camps in Solovki, Central Russia, Sarov, and Kulma, ending in 1937 in the Far North. But he was well prepared to accept his lot.

Bishop Herman had always been drawn to the solitary life of an ascetic. While in exile in Arzamas he met holy clairvoyant women of the closed Diveyevo Convent, and one of them prophecied that his dream of solitary ascetic life would be fulfilled—only in banishment instead of in a monastery. His was a preciously refined soul, endowed with a poetic outlook on life. His Academy dissertation, "The Moral Teaching of St. Symeon the New Theologian," highly praised in Academy circles, had undoubtedly much to do with the formation of his spiritual outlook on life. With what humbleness and humor he recounts in his letters how he was scooping and cleaning out outhouses, thereby receiving the honor of imitating St. John Damascene! Together with his brother he left a multitude of letters, addressed to his spiritual daughters, members of the catacomb convent, where much was concealed in code due to the strict postal censorship. But what a wealth of spiritual refinement and wisdom are contained in these letters! What beautiful classic language, exalted and lyrical! Truly, these are treasures coming out of the 20th-century catacombs.

III.

1927—1942

From December, 1924, for a year Bishop Barlaam was bishop of Mogilev in the South. How everything had changed by then! He was moved because of the constant arrest of bishops. By July 13, 1927, he was bishop of Perm, and while he was temporarily in Yaroslav, the infamous Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius came out. This document was not a surprise to him, but it was entirely unacceptable for any Orthodox soul. Together with the local hierarchs, Bishop Barlaam signed this document of protest:

ARCHBISHOP BARLAAM

FROM THE EPISTLE OF THE YAROSLAV BISHOPS
to Metropolitan Sergius, Feb. 6, 1928

Your Eminence:

In your appeal to the children of the Orthodox Church of July 29, 1927, you declare in categorical form a program of your future leadership, the realization of which would inevitably bring the Church new misfortunes and would deepen the infirmities and sufferings which have possession of it. According to your program, the spiritual and Divine principle in the Church's economy is entirely subordinated to the worldly and earthly principle, whose cornerstone is not a concern by all means possible for the defense of the true faith and Christian piety, but a totally unnecessary pleasing of those who are "outside," leaving no room for the most important condition for the ordering of internal church life in accordance with the commandments of Christ and the Gospel—the freedom given to the Church by her Heavenly Founder which is a part of her very nature. You oblige the children of the Church, and first of all, of course, the episcopate, to have a loyal attitude to the civil authority.

We welcome this demand and testify that we have always been, are, and shall be honest and conscientious citizens of our native land; but this, we affirm, has nothing in common with the politics and intrigue with which you have bound it up, and it does not oblige the children of the Church to voluntarily refuse the rights which have been given to it by the civil authority itself (the election by communities of believers of spiritual leaders for themselves).

In place of the internal Church freedom which had been restored, you make broad use of administrative arbitrariness, from which the Church suffered much even earlier. At your own personal discretion you practice a purposeless, unjustifiable transferral of bishops, often against their own desire and that of their flock, you assign vicars without the knowledge of the ruling bishops of the dioceses, you suspend bishops who are not pleasing to you, etc.

All this and much else in your governance of the Church, which is, we are profoundly convinced, a clear violation of the All-Russian Council of 1917-1918, and ever more increases the disorders and destruction in church life, compels us to declare to Your Eminence:

We, the bishops of the Yaroslav church region, acknowledging the responsibility which lies on us before God for those things which have been entrusted to our pastoral guidance—the purity of the Holy Orthodox Faith, and the freedom for the ordering of inward church-religious life which Christ has given us as a testament—in order to calm the disturbed conscience of the faithful, having no other way out of the fatal situation which has been created for the Church, from this time onwards separate from you and refuse to acknowledge for you and your Synod the right to the higher administration of the Church.

Our present decision will remain in effect until you acknowledge the incorrectness of your acts and measures as leader and openly repent of your errors, or until His Eminence, Metropolitan Peter, should return to power.

Agathangelus, Metropolitan of Yaroslav
Seraphim, Archbishop of Uglich (Vicar of the Yaroslav Diocese, former Substitute of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens)
Archbishop Barlaam, formerly of Perm, temporarily governing the Lyubinsk Vicariate
Eugene, Bishop of Rostov (Vicar of the Yaroslav Diocese)

As a reaction to this protest, Metropolitan Sergius did not find anything better to do than to issue an ukase in which all those hierarchs who disagreed with his Declaration were automatically proclaimed "counter-revolutionaries," and as such quite legitimately were to be arrested by GPU agents as enemies of the people. Bishop Barlaam, together with others, issued immediately another epistle, stating that they did not protest against Metropolitan Sergius' right of administration but that they disagreed with his policy. Nevertheless, all the hierarchs who in some way or another disagreed and did not blindly follow Metropolitan Sergius were indeed arrested and most of them vanished forever without a trace. Bishop Barlaam was then temporarily governing the Liublin diocese, a vicariate of Yaroslav. In November of that same year, he was officially relieved of his archpastoral duties. In 1930, however, for his opposition to Metropolitan Sergius, he was arrested and imprisoned, and his sufferings began in earnest—lasting, with short intervals of relative freedom in exile, for the rest of his much-suffering life. Yaroslav prison in later years was considered one of the most cruel and sadistic places of the Soviet system, but his exile was not much better. In 1931 he was in Solovki, and in 1933 on Bear Mountain near Petrozavodsk.

The state of utter despair which was experienced especially by clergymen in these years was so intense that few made any distinction between it and death. They knew that they had been condemned to execution, and it was only a question of time before the sentence would be fulfilled. In that respect it was the happiest time in their life—for the meeting with Christ was so close.

One witness, who years later knew Fr. Dimitry Dudko, stated: "In the camps we often encountered our brother-clergymen and secretly served Liturgy, sometimes on a wooden crate, sometimes on somebody's back; at that time we did not stop to think whether such things were permissible. The thirst to be in union with Christ was stronger than any hindrance. Sometimes our people from outside would send us the Holy Gifts. There, behind the bars and barbed wire, as in some Orthodox mission, we secretly performed all the church sacraments. I baptized, performed weddings and burials, and preached.* It has been recorded that a certain anti-Sergianist priest, Father Alexander, every day would come to work early, at dawn, and on a tree stump, kneeling, would serve the Divine Liturgy. Several people saw how a beam of light descended from heaven and entered his chalice, transfiguring him and those around him. (Memoirs of N. Urusova).

An innocent man, a humble and kind monk, a man with a soft, loving heart who loved long church services according to the monastic typicon, Archbishop Barlaam suffered terribly at being separated from his spiritual children, who regarded him as an elder and an irreplaceable spiritual instructor. He wrote letters of instruction to them whenever possible. For those in "freedom," these letters exuded a breath of fresh air in the stifling Soviet reality. They breathe the spirit of true Christian humility. Together with the letters of his brother, they constitute what today might be called a Christian teaching on the enduring of suffering in a society that has grown hostile and hateful towards just plain human beings.

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* Fr. Nicholas Troubetskoy, *Le Messager*, Paris, 1979, no. 128.

IV.

LETTERS FROM EXILE ON SPIRITUAL LIFE

The letters which have survived and reached the free world, thanks to Samizdat, were written from 1923 up to 1936, after which there is no trace whatever of Bishop Herman. There are seven letters of Archbishop Barlaam and 39 of his brother. They were written to encourage their spiritual children, having one main theme: sobriety and guidance in acquiring the principle virtue—the humility of wisdom. They also reveal, in a disguised form, some bits of information about their authors: their perpetual harassment, from prison to exile and back again to prison, and their amazing absence of bitterness. Here are some major points of their teaching:

1. The letters contain a perceptive analysis of the behavioral patterns of our fallen nature from the patristic, spiritual, and psychological points of view.

2. The lessons they give come from *personal experience* in the deeply tragic situation they were forced to endure: exile, a constant lack of daily essential needs, harassments, perpetual banishment (in the case of Bishop Herman) and physical ailments (Archbishop Barlaam).

3. There is demonstrated in them a remarkable peace, a deeply poetic inward inspiration, interspersed with paraphrases (due to the absence of books in exile) of exalted patristic writings on ascetic life, or with melancholy lyrical retreats into past reality or into the hidden beauty even of the present. In short, the letters give an *ascetic philosophy of love for God and for life.*

4. The meaning of suffering: Suffering is when our spirit or "self" must separate itself from its own righteousness and must accept God's righteousness, which is hard and confining to our soul—in other words, it means to accept God's will rather than our own, so that we might become instruments of God.

5. The meaning of spiritual happiness: "What happiness and what endless and everlasting joy, to be at least a partial participant in those Wounds by which all have been healed, and to be at least a minute particle of that mighty eternal Power which indicates to all creation the eternally ancient and eternally new path to the Resurrection through self-denial and love"—writes Bishop Herman.

Here are some excerpts from the teaching of the brother-bishops:

THE LETTERS OF BISHOP BARLAAM

1. *ON THE CORRECT SPIRITUAL ATTITUDE*

(Letter of Archbishop Barlaam to Abbess M.)

You wish to see your correction from weakness and negligence and thereby to be justified; but this is not quite correct. Study again what I wrote earlier; your soul has not taken in everything I said there. But don't be surprised—this can't be done all at once; it becomes clear gradually with God's help. I will repeat briefly:

1. We are not justified by correcting ourselves, not by good deeds; all this is undermined by our common sinfulness, and in any case we are obliged to do it by our God-like nature. But we are *justified* by humility and repentance: *A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; a heart that is contrite and humble God will not despise.* You will find this somewhere in the letters of Optina Elder Macarius. Therefore, it is *good* that you have failings and weaknesses; with repentance and contrition they will lead you into Paradise. But if you do not have any, then a trust in your own correctness can hinder you greatly through secret self-esteem and a pharisaical trust in the labors and virtues you have borne: "I have earned it—pay me."

2. Further, you write: "I am afraid to receive Communion often; I do not get better; my sins are always the same." Well and good, but you wash your clothes often, and do you get angry because they don't get better but are always covered with the same dust and dirt? Is it not the contrary? So look in the same way at the purity of the soul: the more a man takes care of it, the better; the more often he washes away the dirt, the more pleasing it is to the Lord. And do not be disturbed if the dirt is always the same—it

is good enough it if only doesn't get worse. It makes no difference what it is that has soiled the purity of the soul; the time comes and one must clean it and wash away the uncleanness with repentance. And to the Lord a single repenting sinner is more pleasing than ten self-satisfied righteous men.

3. "I would like to be like M., but now I am afraid of being beneath even laymen." This means, again, you want to be included among the righteous; you do not have humility; you are always striving for the heights. It is the evil one who wants by every means to make you think of yourself: "I am not as other men." And why do you think so ill of laymen: Don't you know that many laymen will be higher than monks? In laymen there is much of the humility of the publican, much patience and contrition; while in monks there is often self esteem, hardness of heart, a pharisaical righteousness ("I have labored—pay me"). A humble person does not compare himself with anyone; he sees everyone as better than himself and closer to God; in some respects he considers himself worse than the demons. Of course, we can't attain to such humility, but at least we can reproach ourselves in our heart in everything and for everything (not just in words; this is often only a proud posturing), we can not condemn anyone and not exalt ourselves above anyone.

4. "I omit my rule, I become tired." Well, so what? We are saved not by a rule, but by humility and sighs to God. You seem to place great significance in the quantity of prostrations and in whatever else is read. No; all this can be just a "sounding brass"; but the whole matter lies in contrition of heart. It is profitable for you to set up a rule not of quantity, but of time; for example: in the morning you can pray for one or two hours. Without hurrying, with contrition of heart, and sometimes with interruptions if your heart experiences delight and softening—perform something from your rule without thinking of fulfilling everything. Thus it might be that you go through only half or three-quarters of your previous rule, and the assigned time is finished, and then there are works of obedience (cleaning the stove, etc.). And what of it? Don't be disturbed; finish with what you have managed to do, and know that the Lord will not demand more of you, but that He does not praise hurrying. He needs your heart, not a count of prostrations nor the mechanism or recitation (of prayers). One person, it may be, will read a single canon or akathist for a whole hour, but with

tears and interrupting it for heartfelt cries to God—that is real prayer. One can read the Gospel and the Psalter also, without paying attention to chapters and schedules, but to one's strength and time, being concerned for quality—to read with concentration, and not hastily. For the sake of works of obedience and concern for one's neighbor one must always shorten the time of one's prayer, since obedience is above fasting and prayer, and not be disturbed by this, but recognize the importance of serving one's neighbor. The quantity of prostrations and a certain correctness in the rule is indispensable for beginners so as to accustom them to pray; but when they have to a certain extent become accustomed to prayer, one should not bind one's feelings to a number of prostrations, but it is better to pray freely, depending only on the amount of time.

5. "Scold me and point out my shortcomings." First of all, I have to praise you for your openness and zeal for salvation. But I do have to scold you for your exaggerated love for correctness, for counting your good deeds and labors and for trusting in them, which is why you do not see the unlimited value of humility, which surpasses all our works and our limping virtues. This is a weak foundation, made, one may say, out of sand, and it can be tolerated only at the beginning of spiritual life, but later on it harms those who are struggling. It is easy with outward correctness (the reading of rules, the keeping of fasts) and with freedom from outward falls to pass over to spiritual self-esteems and to pride, and from there to "sanctity" and "clairvoyance" from the left side [demonic]. Quickly throw this foundation out of your head and heart; leave off giving value to labors, the correction of rules, and so forth. Do every good thing that is accessible to you, and bear every labor as an order from God, without evaluating it; for the value is not in them, but in the acquisition through them of humility, faith, profound purity, repentance, contrition, and finally, love for God and neighbor. No one praises a student when he is still studying, but when he receives a diploma. All labors are only lessons (props), while the diploma is in humility, contrition, purity (to the extent possible). One person might come to all this through sorrows or illness, without special labors and rules, and he will not be lower than those who have labored.

And so, make your own foundation of the soul, seeking self-reproach, repentance, patience, contrition, and firm and undeceived trust in God's mercy. At the Last Judgment the righteous will be recognized only by their humility and their considering themselves worthless, and not by good deeds, even if they have done them. This is the true attitude.

2. *ON "GOOD" FEELINGS AND SELF IMPORTANCE*

He who is gloomy does not believe in the mercy of God, but bases his spirituality on his own rotten ascetic achievements and seeming external improvements; he boasts in them and being overwhelmed with self-importance, measures his feelings as if with a thermometer—alas, the fruits of self love!

Do not exalt yourself above any sinner, and do not place trust in your correctness, for self-esteem can devour all our feats and good deeds, if you have any. Meekly enduring other people's sins, although most difficult, is the most rewarding and surest way.

3. *ON ENDURANCE*

Where there is endurance, there is bound to be salvation. A relatively peaceful life, even if with a good prayerful attitude, is still lower than a life of tribulation with a good prayerful attitude, if one is patient with others.

4. *ON WHAT WE MUST FEAR*

One must fear not faults, but coldness of heart, self-satisfaction, an unrepentant attitude.

5. *ON CORRECTNESS*

We are all insane over self-esteem, and therefore when we correct ourselves a little in some way or other, we at once give value to ourselves and unnoticeably become refined pharisees: we praise ourselves for what grace has done, according to God's mercy, and not because of our achievements. Therefore, in spiritual matters correctness can do us more harm than incorrectness with a feeling of repentance. You will say: "With correctness one can also repent." Repent of what, if we see ourselves as correct? It is just a step away from deception. True correctness cannot exist. Therefore, the Holy Fathers teach that deeds do not justify us, even if we are obliged to do good deeds (by the power of God), as a bird is obliged to sing, for that is why it is created. We are created to do good deeds; such is our nature. It would be silly to become proud that we have two arms and two legs—such is our nature. And if we do not do good deeds, then we err severely against our nature and God's will. Therefore, it is good to do the deeds, but not in order to boast in our struggles and achievements, but in order to acquire a greater degree of humility and repentance. He who fasts and prays not to acquire humility and repentance, but for pleasing God and for self-justification—is quite mistaken.

6. *ON INFIRMITIES*

Do not become despondent over your infirmities, and do not consider them your enemies. Quite the contrary: although ugly, they are our spiritual friends, our tax-collectors.

7. *ON SORROWS*

Sorrows are both proofs and pathfinders to the eternal, unearthly joys and experiences where our Lord, the Theotokos, and the saints are.

It seems that the time has come when our Lord is calling His people and is purifying them with sorrows in order to cross over into heavenly life; after all, this is the purpose we live for. May the will of God and His mercy be done! Let us hope for that, and let us prepare ourselves every day to meet God, and to live as during Passion Week.

8. *ON SELF-DEBASEMENT*

The seeing and evaluating of one's own achievements and deeds will only increase sinful and deceitful self-esteem and diminish our sole hope on God's mercy. What is more reliable and pleasing to God from us is the following: "O Lord, I have nothing and dare not even lift up my eyes; have mercy on me according to Thy great mercy!" The more there will be contrition and trust in God, and not in deeds or something else of our own, the more God's mercy will increase in us.

9. *THE INWARD TEMPLE*

There is no need to weep much over the destruction of a church; after all, each of us, according to God's mercy, has or should have his own church—the heart; go in there and pray, as much as you have strength and time. If this church is not well made and is abandoned (without inward prayer), then the visible church will be of little benefit.

LETTERS OF BISHOP HERMAN

1. *Letter of May 17/30, 1925*

You and I have not reached the spiritual condition when what is purely spiritual, or rather, when grace-given energy not only conquers the weakness of our flesh and the body, but also gives wings to our spirit, which is bound up with this burden (of the flesh) and is also not all-powerful, and without God has no wings. Up to now, by means of the natural physical and spiritual resources given to us by nature and our parents, the Lord and the Spirit of God act through this physical suppleness and energetic psychic nature of ours. But life itself at this time does not yet reveal to us its whole face; this is why there is so much vigor in us, and even more often, so much good idealistic and every other kind of passion.

But this zone sooner or later comes to an end, and there comes for everyone his Gethsemane with its battles and exhaustion, all the way to bloody sweat, and then also Golgotha. Both the one and the other cause torment and suffering, and suffering all the more often because our spirit has to separate itself from its own righteousness (no matter how pure and ideal it may seem to us) and be reconciled with the righteous will of God, which for our psychic nature is very confining and difficult.

You write that by May 1st "such-and-such" is to happen, and because of this your heart groans and you say: "This is the will of God, and in it there can be nothing tormenting"—and all the same you are tormented. Remember the bloody sweat of Gethsemane; remember these constant words of our Teacher, that one can follow after Him only by "taking up the cross." All this should tell you that the passage of our spirit into the will of God is always tormenting, as in general is every passage from a simpler form to a more perfect and higher form, such as is every physical and, all the more, every spiritual birth. We have here on earth only the beginning of this entire rebirth of our will into the Will of God, of our mind (even that of a believer) into the Mind of God, of our small and imperfect love into the Perfect and All-embracing Tri-hypostatical Love. When a man more fully and positively (that is, loving it, considering it as the only truth in life) turns to the side of this eternal Truth, or else completely turns away from it, he no longer lives and is obliged to die. He has gone through everything that this life can give and has become ripe for the future.

The meaning of one's personal Gethsemane is: suffering and trembling inwardly, to fulfill patiently what has been commanded us, without upsetting oneself over the question why it is this way and not otherwise; for sometimes one is brought equally to God by the powerful shocks coming from a heartfelt acceptance of good, and by frightful falls. Judas was with Christ all the time, and he betrayed Him; the thief was without Christ the whole time, and he came to believe in Him. If neither in the life of the Lord nor in the history of our faith had there been clear indications of these alternations between light and darkness, and of the final triumph of light, then of course it would have been frightful. But we must cheer up our hearts with the words of the Apostle Paul, spoken about the Jews and the Gentiles, and perhaps applicable also to those now alive: "For God hath concluded them all in disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all" (cf. Romans 11:32). Further, we do not know how near or far from us is sorrow.

Ours is a time when too great shocks are needed, not only to wake up the minds of men, but also to return man to the central point of all that is truly human—to his heart.

Thus, your exhaustion of body and soul is understandable. Let us bear submissively His Cross, awaiting, if not here, then there, rest from the Lord and a full revelation of the profound meaning of everything that wounds and beats us now so painfully.

2. *Letter of August 30, 1932*

Here August will soon be at an end. Involuntarily, despite the crucial daily cares, thoughts, and worries which push away somewhere deep into the depths of the soul everything that has gone before, one remembers the Feast of Gethsemane (the Dormition of the Theotokos, August 15), the quiet skete filled with people, the prolonged and moving service around the tomb of the Most Pure One, the triumphal procession with her Shroud along the paths of the skete with the beautiful ringing of the bells, the abundant meal with purple cabbage and fragrant kvas made of currants, and Bethany with its splendid rector, and the cozy town with the little house not far from the Lavra. In this remembrance purely spiritual experiences are interwoven with worldly and earthly ones, and it is difficult to separate them from each other, just as it is impossible to cut the soul away from the body and alter their mystical unity.

All this is lingered over by a kind of sweet melancholy that eats at the heart, as if seeing blue smoke in the distance on a clear summer day; and everything present, despite its spiritual advantages over the past, seems so cruel, crude, and severe. Will there ever be a chance to bring together this past, without its sin, and the present, without its cruel shocks and misfortunes, into a single bright whole, where everything there would be Christ, His unsetting light and mutual love, without which one feels so homeless and despondent nowadays. And at the present time His sword of division cuts away those who were once close and one in mind, and His meek humility and peace are absent even among those who are equally called by His Name.

But I believe that this will be, and the soul of each one who has gone through the torment of deprivations, falls, betrayals, faintheartedness, and denial will again, not merely through the lips and the passing movement of feelings, but with all their life, will sing out "Hosanna" to Him, as to the Conqueror of death and evil.

3. *Letter of October 5/18, 1933*

It seems to me that what is happening now is not merely the destruction of a fortress and of what for many is the holy of holies. What is happening is the cleansing of these holy things, their sanctification through fire of cruel trials and testings, through the destruction of forms which in their unique but in many respects earthly beauty crush the meaning and content which are chained within them. New forms are being forged that make it easier for them to be penetrated and filled by precisely the spirit and life which are often denied by their creators and which often, in the name of an admitted and premeditated battle against Him are denied in principle, in order that through the Golgotha of annihilation they might be resurrected in power.

Look and see how life in actual fact has become ascetic, how self-renunciation, an unheard-of self-renunciation, is becoming not an exception, but a rule for everyone, how urgently everything that has become separated in the most unlike spheres of life is coming to unity through collectivization, and so forth.

You will say that all this is not in His Name, but against Him. Yes, that is true. Now everything that has His seal is in sorrows, in Gethsemane and on Golgotha. This is true. But it is just as true that all efforts and creativity are being directed to the creation of the very forms of life which have all, in their idea, been predicted by Him, cannot be realized without Him, and unfailingly lead to Him. "All things are through Him, by Him, and unto Him," and only excessive grief or a superficial reflection on these great words of the Apostle hinder one from seeing that all this is being accomplished. Involuntarily one recalls the words of Chrysostom: "God acts through those very men who hinder and resist; He uses His enemies as an implement of His glory, so that you might know that no one can frustrate the decrees of God or avert His high right hand."

Ancient Israel had to come through the ruins of its marvellous temple, through long years of being deprived of the Divine services that make the heart contrite, and through a whole sea of tears, before reaching another house of God, in which they saw Him of Whom both their sacrifices and prophecies spoke. Mary Magdalene came to Him through the horror of demonic possession, Mary of Egypt through a furnace of immorality and raging fornication, the thief through the torments of the cross. These, it seems to me, are the signposts that should be placed in front of every grief and especially before one's intolerably sad recollections. You and perhaps the majority of us were near Him when He was fragrant with goodness and was surrounded by the grandeur of miracles, the light of reverence; now do not be afraid of His dishonor, of Gethsemane and Golgotha, so that, if not around you, then at least within you, you might see the unconquerable light of His truth and resurrection.

May the Lord help you in the approaching winter with all its cares and worries. The life of everyone is now going through the narrow gates, and he who submissively accepts this as the unavoidable and only path to salvation is much happier than one who is upset, who complains about the inconvenience, and as it were waits for someone to push and shove him through the gates.

4. *Letter of December 2/15, 1936*

I think that what you are experiencing is being experienced now in some degree by very many, and only the noise of the present reality and the grandiose rebuilding, which demands an extreme concentration of all man's powers of soul, is drowning out these quiet groans of the soul and hindering men from understanding their prophetic meaning. Your condition is a reflection of the common disease and by no means is it something hopeless, because of which one must allow himself to become hysterical. It is not without the will of God that we have been placed in this whirlpool of passions, of warfare, and of every kind of brazen undertaking and fall. He never tempts by means of evil, and if one were to take away from the reality that surrounds us the spirit of excessive pride and sensuality, in everything we would see reflections of His Truth and His commandments. His laws have been placed in the hearts and minds of men. They are ineradicable, like nature. And although those who are building (i.e. the Soviets) in every way ignore Him and wish to remove Him and even the memory of Him from life, still He remains the cornerstone and the power of the fundamental ideas of the new society. In this is a pledge of a dawning and conversion and spiritual renewal, while for those who suffer and are pained over this "apootasy" it is encouragement, peace, and patience.

Do not be despondent. Without Him we are always naked and powerless. He is both yesterday, today and tomorrow the same. Can He be not with us, when around us and within us rages such a storm? And with Him we can endure anything and can valiantly encounter any temptation. He has power to take away instantly all pain from your heart, but does not do it, because it is better to let the pain take its course, and for this it is necessary to ask from Him only endurance.

ARCHBISHOP BARLAAM

V

THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

The information we have about Archbishop Barlaam's last years comes from the scanty mention of it in the letters of his brother, based on what his spiritual daughters wrote him after their infrequent visits to Archbishop Barlaam.

In 1931 Bishop Herman writes: "I am now in Great Ustiug. Nicholas (meaning himself) has had to endure and see in these parts a lot of hard things, but now he lives more or less peacefully. Victor (meaning Archbishop Barlaam) recently went to take his place at Zosima's (meaning St. Zosima's Solovki concentration camp)."

1932: "Barlaam is now at the Bear Mountain Station near Petrozavodsk (a fierce concentration camp)."

1933: "The other day I was overjoyed that the true dove of God B (Barlaam) has been set free from captivity, but I still don't know any details. It is so much more joyous because there was so little hope for this and they even said that he had died. And so many, so very many of my brethren and colleagues (bishops and clergy), especially there from whence God delivered me, have already gone to eternal rest. Only yesterday I received a letter from there, and it was horrible, from the human standpoint, to read, and more than that, to feel how death stands over everyone with whom you are not only united in a common path (clergy), but also in oneness of expectation (salvation). But from another point of view, in this process of dying I sense also redemption and resurrection. . . Give my greetings to Victor." In December of the same year: "Victor is all right in Vologda (exile)."

1935: "Victor lives as before in Vologda." And later: "Victor, it seems, has become a real invalid; he cannot walk for more than a few minutes due to the excessive exhaustion of his heart."

In May, 1936: "They went to Vologda in order to see the sick one. Two of the closest ones visited him. A tiny room with dirty wallpaper, thinly separated from the living quarters of the landlord by a curtain in place of a door. A poorly covered bed, near it a little table, and two other tables against the wall. And that is all its furnishings. They write to me that he is thin, pale and totally grey. In everything there is deprivation, as it seemed to them, which is correct, but this poverty is pleasing to him. He received them very lovingly, was interested in the life of his brother, and advised him to spend more time occupying himself with the inward world, rather than with external things, even if they be good. There is much truth in this. Then he gave them spiritual counsel and consoled them greatly. May C (hrist) save him. He is pleased with his ailment, whcih has chained him to his bed and has almost made him an invalid. I myself deeply believe in the providence of this: it saves him from the exhausting changes of places (prisons) and undoubtedly helps him to accumulate more of that spiritual warmth which is so indispensable in our cold time. His brother (Bishop Herman) so far lives in the same situation You have probably heard about the sickness (arrest) which took hold of his relatives. For him it is a great sorrow, although it occurred not without the will of God, Who knows better than we what best leads each of us to our final and eternal goal." And in December he writes with envy: "Perhaps it is better for me to imitate Victor, who lives like a recluse." These were Bishop Herman's last known words.

There is even less mention about himself in Archbishop Barlaam's own letters; we can only guess what is in his heart: "It is very good for the soul's salvation to be a cell-attendant. As for myself, I would have gone to someone as a cell-attendant, but, alas, I have no strength and no opportunity. My legs feel better, however. . . But my general condition is worse. Before Cheese-fare Week I had a stroke. The doctor saw me twice. Now, glory be to God, it is better. Everything tiring is harmful for me, so I had to shorten my prayer rule. I need fresh air, but all I can go outside for is ten minutes. . . I read the whole Psalter during Great Lent and am shortening the Hours. The Psalmist says: *I remembered the days of old and gained knowledge of all Thy works* (Ps. 142:5). For you too it is very profiting to remember holy things in your life. It is not vanity, but a consoling relief for the soul; it is a substitute for spiritual reading."

After these few words, dating apparently from 1936. Archbishop Barlaam was abandoned. The letters from his brother came more and more rarely, until there were none, indicating either that he had been killed by shooting or had perished in the nightmarish labor-camp system, which was then headed by the maniac Yezhov. Visitors to Archbishop Barlaam also decreased considerably, for they also were given over to the same fate. The pain in his legs and actually all over his body increased and he had a constant and penetrating cold, which settled deep inside his almost immovable body. The years of dying lingered on. His ailing heart still continued to beat.

Outside, the world was now at war. The hope in the Russian people of being liberated from the atheist yoke was growing more intense with each day of war and deprivation. The people's sufferings increased as the authorities, out of fear, put on more pressure. No one had time for Archbishop Barlaam. And in his forlorn state he understood all and ceaselessly prayed for the world. He knew of the glorious crowns God will bestow upon those who have suffered, upon those who have cultivated kindness of heart, forgiving love, and a deep understanding of human weakness. . . And he prayed for all.

He was not dead yet in the horrible Vologda prison. . . Listening to the majestic singing of the blizzard's howling wind, a many-voiced choir that rolled like billows over the ever-changing sea of life, he could not but pray to his patron saint, Monk Barlaam, that wondrous ascetic of old. Before a man dies, it is said, his patron saint together with his guardian angel comes to accompany the soul to the other world. This saint had gone to India and met the fair Prince Ioasaph, who was to inherit all the earthly riches of a great kingdom. But Barlaam, filled with divine zeal to make him an inheritor of the heavenly kingdom, converted him to Christ. And the heavens opened up to him, and he beheld the meaning of human existence and what is prepared for those who love God, the Giver of Life. Oh, what a blissful state he beheld when he was taken out of his body and placed in the heavenly Kingdom of Christ! He saw what unutterable joy awaits mortal men for all the suffering endured in this vale of tears, our earthly realm! The original Life of these saints presents a true revelation of Paradise, which the suffering hierarch Barlaam, now half frozen to death and covered with snow in his pitiable shelter, had read so many times in his younger days and now could not help but remember:

Now when he had prayed in tears for many hours, and often bent the knee, he sunk down upon the pavement. . . and he saw himself carried off by certain awesome men, and passing through places which he had never heretofore beheld. He stood in a mighty plain, all abloom with fresh and fragrant flowers, where he beheld all manner of plants of diverse colors, charged with strange and marvellous fruits, pleasant to the eye and inviting to the touch. The leaves of the trees rustled clearly in a gentle breeze, and, as they shook, sent forth a gracious perfume that never ceaed to please the senses. Thrones were set there, fashioned of the purest gold and costly stones, throwing out never so bright a luster, and radiant settlers among wondrous couches too beautiful to be described. And beside them there were running waters exceeding clear, and delightful to the eye. When these awesome men had led him through this great and wondrous plain, they brought him to a city that glistened with an indescribable light, whose walls were of dazzling gold, with high upreared parapets, built of gems such as man hath never seen. Ah, who could describe the beauty and brightness of that city? Light, ever shooting from above, filled all her streets wtih bright rays; and winged angelic squadrous, each of them itself a light, dwelt in this city, making such melody as mortal ear never heard. And he heard a voice crying: 'This is the rest of the righteous; this is the gladness of them that have pleased the Lord. . .'"

(St. John Damascene)

Finally the frost ceased its biting, and the soft dazzling snow, like lightning, with warm luster paved the way for the soul of the righteous hierarch Barlaam to ascend where the righteous repose. And he went up to join the saints, to the place prepared for the righteous, to be forever glorifying God. Amen!

Holy New Martyrs Barlaam and Herman, pray to God for us!

F.H.

Sources: Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs*, Vol. II; "Russian Monk", March 6, 1911; Archbishop Nikon, *Biography of Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky*, Vol. I; Archimandrite Symeon, *Schema-Archimandrite Gabriel, Elder of Pskov;* Regelson, *Tragedy of the Russian Church;* St. John of Damascus, Life of *Sts. Ioasaph and Barlaam*; "Nadezhda", No. 5; "Vestnik", Nos. 107 and 109.

III

RUSSIA'S CATACOMB SAINTS

> *O wonderful and glorious army of new sufferers!*
> *Who can worthily glorify you? Truly blessed is*
> *the ground soaked with your blood,*
> *and holy are the places that received*
> *your bodies.*
>
> Archbishop John Maximovitch

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Soviet persecution of religion which produced the New Martyrs was not a chance or incidental phenomenon. In ancient times the persecutions of Christians were the result of a deliberate plan on the part of pagan emperors like Diocletian and Julian the Apostate—a plan to exterminate the Christian Faith. In the same way, the plan to exterminate religion, and in particular Orthodox Christianity, was a central part of Soviet policy from the very beginning, and the cruel measures needed to implement this plan were clearly foreseen and commanded by the Communist government at its highest levels. The following excerpt from a letter of the founder of the Communist regime in Russia may be considered a primary document demonstrating this point.

LENIN'S DIRECTIVES

FROM THE LETTER OF V. LENIN TO MOLOTOV

FEBRUARY 10, 1922

If it is necessary for the accomplishment of certain political aims to resort to a series of cruelties, then it is imperative to accomplish them in the most energetic way and in the shortest span of time possible, for otherwise, the masses of people will not endure a prolonged utilization of cruelties. . . .In this connection the larger amount of representatives of bourgeoisie and reactionary churchmen we will succeed in executing by shooting the better.

LENIN

(*Le Messager* of the Russian Christian Student Movement, No. 98; Paris, 1970)

17

Starets Anatole the Younger

AND THE LAST MONK-CONFESSORS OF OPTINA MONASTERY

Commemorated July 30 (†1922)

> ***Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith***
> **II Cor. 13:15**

ONCE THE PRIDE OF Holy Russia, it is not surprising that her monasteries were primary targets for destruction in the atheist revolutionaries' campaign to eradicate religion. Among the greatest tragedies was the destruction of the famous Optina Monastery, renown for her God-bearing Elders or 'Startsi' who were direct successors to the disciples of that great Holy Father, Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky. In the 19th century, Optina reached a high level of spiritual development, attracting literally thousands of pilgrims among whom were the famous Russian writers and philosophers: Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Kireyevsky, Leontiev, Tolstoy, V. Soloviev, and others.

These elders who were close to the people, nurtured in the common Russian man a sense of deep devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ. And when the test of the Revolution came, many confessed Christ with their lives. So also were the fathers of Optina Monastery. Several books have been written about the last great Optina elder, Nectary, who ended his life as a martyr-confessor. Here, however, let us set forth for posterity those scanty lines concerning other lesser known and even unknown monk-martyrs.

When the Soviets finally closed and destroyed the monastery in 1925-27, they also attempted to silence their bloody deeds. Thus, for example, one monk, Fr. Panteleimon, had his head chopped off; many of the buildings were destroyed; the famous manuscript library was shipped away and sold off by auctioneers in Paris in the 1930's—some of these books were saved by the grieving Optina monks and others who cherished them and hoped to see in them tokens of its future restoration.

HAVING ARRIVED at Kozelsk, located not far from Optina Monastery, we walked across a beautiful meadow covered with a luxuriant green growth. It spread itself before us like a wonderful carpet that was adorned with varicolored flowers. And then, on a slope of a hill towering over the river Zhizdra, there it was: the Optina Monastery, that great monastic desert, our own Thebaid or Trans-Jordan... We came to the Zhizdra. There was a ferry-boat ready to take us across the river. And then with awe we stepped onto the soil of the holy monastery, where everything had been sanctified by the ascetic labors of the monks, with their tears and unceasing prayers. When we entered the monastery we were told that to see Starets Anatole we must go past the orchard and then out through the monastery gate, taking a little path through the thick pine forest that leads right up to the Skete. Finally we arrived and saw the Skete bell tower, and on the right of it a little hut where the great Startsi had lived. At last, in the depth of the Skete in a small cell [*see right*], we saw Father Anatole, who received us with love. As we conversed with him his gift of clairvoyance was revealed to us. This first meeting with him remained in our memory for life..."* And indeed there was in the whole personality of Father Anatole something similar to the freshness of the sun-lit wildflowers, a youthfulness and quiet joy

From his early years Alexander Potapov wanted eagerly to become a monk, but his mother did not wish it, even though he was not the only son in the family. Like St. Sergius of Radonezh, he went to the monastery only after her death, joining the Optina brotherhood, and for many years was the cell-attendant of the great Starets Ambrose, absorbing the spirit of his great master so well that while still only a hierodeacon he functioned already as a Starets, at first in the Skete and later as the main Starets in the Monastery itself, being revered and loved especially by the visitors and pilgrims from outside.

From his very first days in Optina he fully absorbed the spirit of its severe asceticism: the tense wakefulness of spirit, the being shut up in one's cell, which is that "cleft in the rock where the Lord spoke to Moses" (St.

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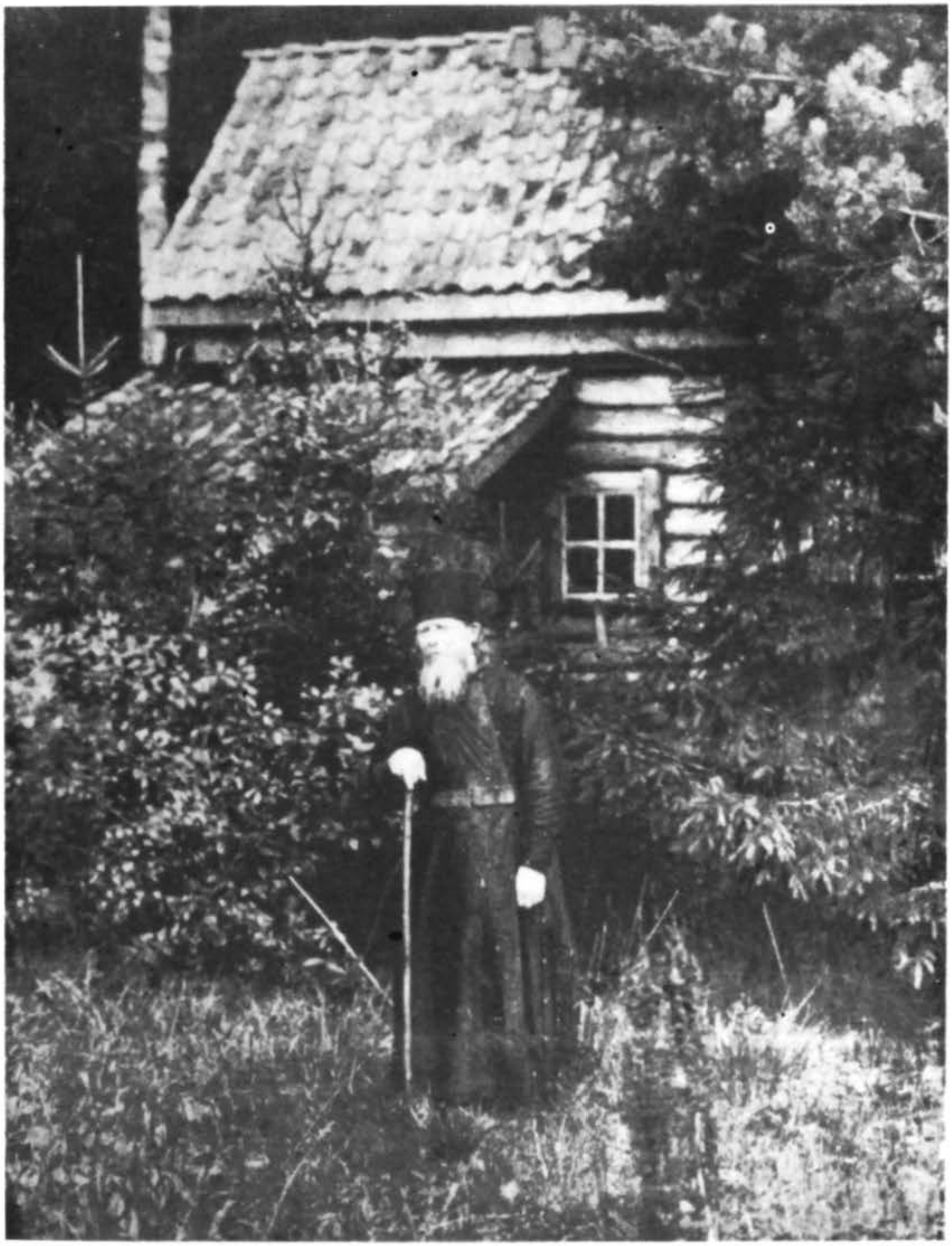
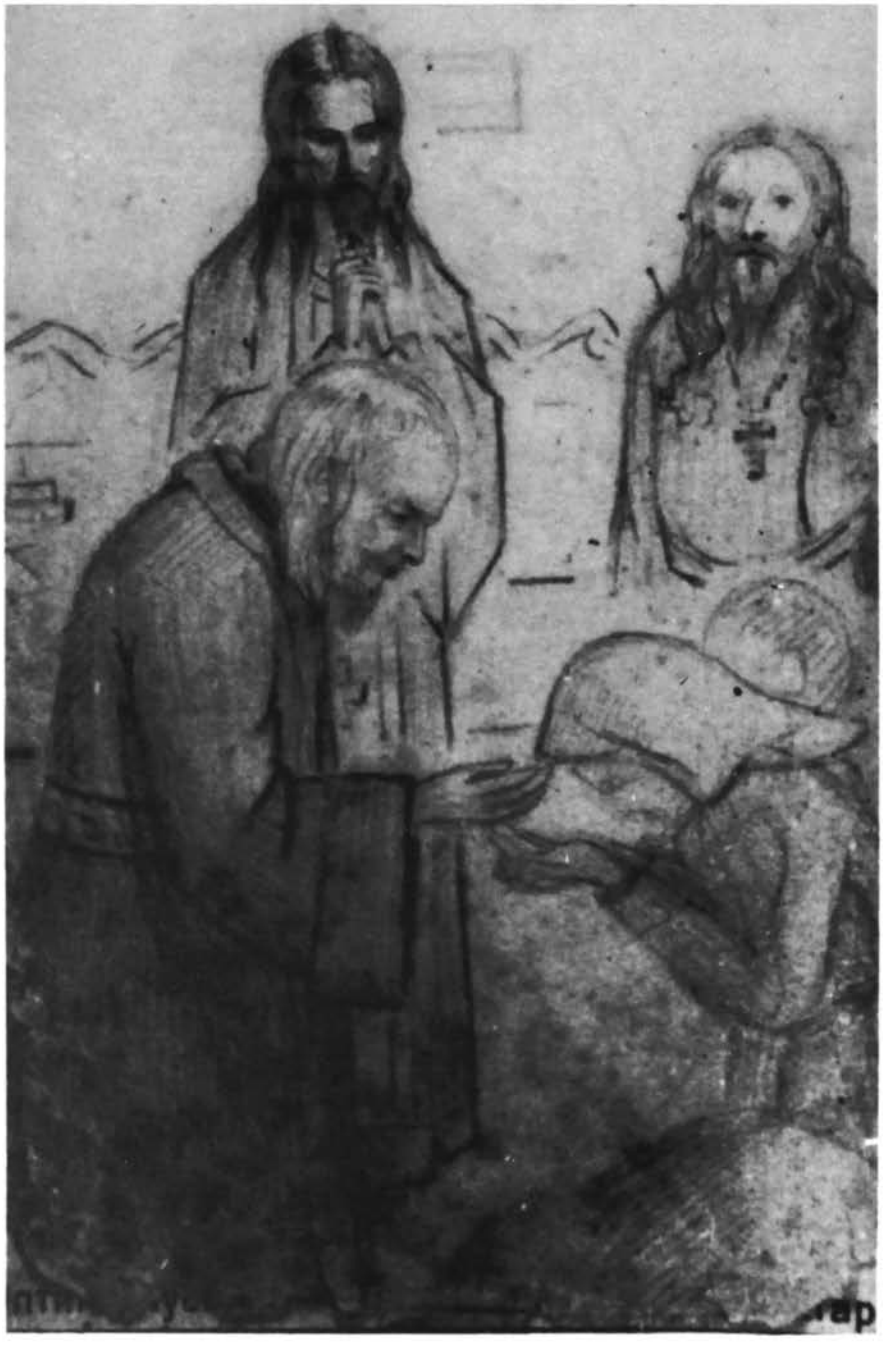
* Memoirs of the Canadian Missionary, Archimandrite Amvrossy Kanavalov.



Elder Anatole of Optina standing before the
much-celebrated cell of Elder Ambrose



A sketch made in 1925 during a visit to Elder Nectarius of Optina (lower left) by Father Adrian Rymarenko, later Archbishop Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo (upper left), whose wife and little son Seraphim, godchild of the Elder, receive the Elder's blessing, while Hieromonk Nikon stands by (right), who later, upon the forced closure and liquidation of the great Optina Monastery, received a martyr's crown.

Isaac the Syrian); and on the other hand he fully partook of the simple and sincere attitude towards everything outward, towards his brethren, the visitors, nature, and the whole surrounding world of God. The Monastery's way of life in accordance with the Typicon, with its church services, its Elders, its spiritually rich work of enlightenment, nurtured in him a great ascetic. At night he did not sleep at all, giving himself fully over to the Jesus Prayer. Often from fatigue he would doze off in church during the reading of the Psalter, only to meet the criticizing eye of someone who did not know of his nightly labors. This inward activity, however, gave rise in him to that unshakable peace which enabled him, in full accord with all the Startsi who had preceeded him, to become a great benefactor to the whole of society as well, educating the souls of thousands of Russian people in true Christian piety. It is quite significant that he should highly value St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, often presenting as a precious gift the Saint's book, *On True Christianity*. A half century later one of his spiritual sons recalled with awe: "In 1921, blessing me to pastoral work as a priest, Starets Anatole told me: 'Take *True Christianity* and *live* according to its directions.' "

Having appropriated the essence of monastic direction, Starets Anatole governed the inward life of the monks with full spiritual power. When, for example, during the monks' confessions twice a day, when they opened their thoughts to him, with deep reverence and concentration they would come up to the Starets one by one, kneel before him, take his blessing and exchange a few words with him, during which time his clairvoyance was often made evident. Some would be brief, others would take a bit longer. It was apparent that the Starets was acting with fatherly love and power. With quiet peace and a feeling of consolation they would withdraw, their soul cleansed anew. And indeed a monk's life in Optina was without a shadow of disturbance or grief; everyone there was deeply joyous in heartfelt concentration.

Father Anatole had a striking gift of seeing the movements of a man's soul, his thoughts and feelings: "In 1916 I was informed that Starets Anatole was expected in St. Petersburg and would stay at Mr. Usov's; and so three of us, my brother, sister and I, went there. On the way my brother and sister both declared that all they actually needed from the Starets was his blessing, but I said that I would like very much to talk with him. After some time he came out into the vestibule to all the people who were waiting for him and began giving his blessing, saying a few words to each one individually. In appearance Father Anatole was very much like St. Seraphim as depicted on his icons: bent over, with a loving and humble face. One would have to see it for himself, for it is impossible to describe. When our turn came, the Starets blessed my brother and sister, but to me he said: 'But you wanted to talk to me, didn't you? Right now I can't; come to me in the evening.' The Elder read my fervent desire, although I had not expressed it in words."*

During his last years St. Anatole lived not far from the church, right opposite it within the monastery wall. The unrest in the people evoked by the revolutionary atheism led the faithful to the Elders — Anatole and Nectarius -- for spiritual support. Father Anatole, although the younger of the two and not yet gray-haired, was the center of attention, Father Nectarius preferring to remain in the background. In his humility Starets Nectarius, when he saw visitors approaching his own cell, would go up to them and say, "Whom are you going to?" and he would lead them away to Father Anatole without their suspecting who he was.

The Soviet authorities began the persecution of monks throughout Russia. Optina became State property, and the godless State obviously had no use for a monastery. Thanks to the efforts of local lay believers, the monastery achieved the status of a State museum, with one church being allowed to function. The monks were terribly harrassed; some were arrested, and some just went away wherever they could go. But even more did the Orthodox faithful come, flocking the holy place in search of consolation.

Starets Anatole's turn finally came. Red Army soldiers arrested him several times, shaved him, tortured and mocked him. He suffered much, but he still received his spiritual children whenever he could. Towards evening on July 29th, 1922, a Soviet commission came, interrogated him for a long time, and was supposed to arrest him. But the Starets, without protesting, modestly begged a 24-hour delay in order to prepare himself. His cell-attendant, the hunchbacked Father Barnabas, was menacingly told to prepare the Elder for departure, as he would be taken away the next day; and with this they left.

Night came on and the Starets began to prepare himself for his journey. The following morning the commission returned. Leaving their cars, they asked the cell-attendant, "Is he ready?" "Yes," answered Fr. Barnabas, "the Starets is ready." And opening the door he led them to the Elder's quarters. Here a disconcerting picture presented itself to their astonished gaze: the Starets, having indeed "prepared himself," lay dead in his coffin in the middle of the room! The Lord had not allowed His faithful servant to be mocked any further, but had taken him to Himself that very night.

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* Memoirs of Elena Kartsev (now Mrs. H. Kontzevitch).

A few days before the Elder's repose, one of his spiritual daughters (E.G.R.) received a letter from him inviting her to come and stay at the Monastery for a while. She delayed in going, and she arrived only on the ninth day after his repose. There she met other people who had likewise been called by the Elder, either by letter or in a dream. One person received word through the Elder of his own repose several hours before it occurred. The body was buried next to the Starets Macarius, whose relics were then found incorrupt.

The next year, just before Easter, the Monastery was finally liquidated. All the remaining monks were arrested and banished, the churches sealed, the graves of the Startsi desecrated, and the Skete turned into a resort for the Soviet "upper class." Abbot Isaac and Starets Nectarius were imprisoned in Kozhelsk; but the latter was soon released and banished 50 miles away from the Monastery, where in the house of a devoted believer he lived until his death in 1928, thus ending the glorious Era of the Startsi of Optina.

In one of the many popular books about Optina Monastery that appeared just before the Revolution, *On the Banks of God's River,* is a touching description of a holy child, the five-year-old son of Fr. Anatole's spiritual daughter. When pregnant with him she fervently prayed to her beloved St. Sergius of Radonezh, promising to dedicate the child to him. However, while attending St. Seraphim's canonization in Sarov (1903), she felt the child leap in her womb, and she began to wonder whether she shouldn't name the child Seraphim instead; but because of a dream she named the child Sergius (Serezha) after all. Five years later, "when Vera and Serezha were leaving our monastery I went to see them off. At that very time I saw that one of our most respected old monks, Father A., was coming out to meet us. We approached him and bowed down to take his blessing. Serezha, putting his little hands forward, said, 'Bless me, Batushka.' Instead, the old monk himself bowed down low to Serezha, touching the ground with his hand, saying, 'No, you first bless me.' And to our astonishment the child put his fingers into the proper position and blessed the old monk with a priest's blessing. What does the future hold for this boy?" concluded the author.

And the answer to this question, as witnessed by N. V. Urusova a third of a century later, comes from *Holy Catacomb Russia*:

"When my sons were arrested in 1937 and banished by the GPU for ten years without right of correspondence, one can well imagine my sorrow. I shed many, many bitter tears, but not even in a single fleeting thought did I complain, but only sought consolation in church; and this could only be in the Catacomb Church, which I sought out everywhere, and by God's mercy I always found it very quickly; and I poured out my grief to the true God-pleasing priests who celebrated catacomb services. And so it was also when, after the arrest of my sons, I left Siberia for Moscow. My sister — who to my horror recognized the Soviet Church — had not been arrested, despite the fact that she had been a Lady-in-Waiting to the Empress. She directed me to a childhood friend of ours with whom she differed on church questions, since this friend was a fervent participant in catacomb services. This woman and other members of this holy catacomb Church greeted me with open arms.... I lived with my sister periodically and visited all the services, which took place in private houses in various parts of Moscow. There was a certain Father Anthony, an old hieromonk, who was our priest and spiritual father. I constantly heard him say: 'As the Starets commands, whatever the Starets says,' and the like.I asked Fr. Anthony where I might see this Starets in order to pour out my grief to him and receive comfort. Whenever he was mentioned it was with great reverence, and he was called an extraordinary holy man. 'No,' Fr. Anthony said, 'that's out of the question; I will tell him everything that you need from him.' In 1941 I became acquainted with a lady in Mozhaisk who had been banished from Moscow because of the arrest of her husband and her only daughter. She was also a member of the Catacomb Church and had been the spiritual daughter of this Starets from the very first years of his priesthood. She told me that the Starets (she didn't give his name) was staying now in a village two miles from Mozhaisk and that she secretly visited his services. To my question whether she couldn't ask him to receive me she replied: 'No, that isn't possible; all the faithful have been denied this, since the GPU has been looking for him for 25 years, and he travels over the whole of Russia from one place to another, being evidently informed by the Holy Spirit whenever it is necessary to go.' Of course I was saddened at this, but there was nothing

I could do about it. The Feast of the Holy Trinity that year was on June 7. Just as nothing in life is due to chance, so was it now: I could not go to Moscow, and in sorrow I sat in my room alone on the eve of the Feast. And then I heard a light tapping at my window; I looked and was dumbfounded. An old nun was tapping, and she was dressed as a nun, in spite of the fact that it was strictly forbidden to wear such garb. It was towards evening. I opened the door and she came in to me with the words: 'The Starets, Father Seraphim, invites you to come to him early tomorrow morning, and if you wish you can confess and receive the Holy Mysteries.' She showed me which road to take and told me to be careful. Before the village itself there was a rye field already in full ear, and she advised me to walk bent down. The back road through this field led right up to the hut where the Starets was staying, and right opposite, across the road, was the GPU station. One can imagine my feelings after the nun, so affable with her radiant face, left. She was called Mother N. There were two nuns with the Starets; the other one was called Mother V. They were always with him. The Starets would stay peacefully at one place for as long as two months or so, and then entirely unexpectedly, at any hour of the day or night, would suddenly say: 'Well, it's time to go!' And he and the nuns would put on rucksacks, which contained all the objects for church services, and immediately leave in any direction, until the Starets would stop and enter some hut or other, evidently by inspiration from Above.

"Early in the morning I set out, walking not on the street but, as had been indicated to me, on the dirt road which led to the back door. Before me was a wondrous monk, not at all old. I have no words to describe his holy appearance; the feeling of reverence before him can't be communicated. I received confession and it was wonderful. After the Divine service and my reception of the Holy Mysteries, he invited me to eat with him. Besides myself there were the lady I mentioned above, the two nuns, and another of his spiritual daughters who had come from Moscow. Oh, the mercy of God! I shall never forget the discourse of which he deemed me worthy, and which continued for several hours. Two days after this spiritual happiness which I experienced while visiting Father Seraphim, I found out from that lady that on the next day, while they were sitting at table, Father Seraphim stood up and said to the nuns: 'Well, it's time to go-' They instantly gathered themselves together and left, and within half an hour, no more, the GPU came looking for him; but the Lord had hidden him. Three months passed; the Germans were already in Mozhaisk when, suddenly, there was again a light tapping on the window, and the same Nun N. came in to me with the words: 'Father Seraphim is in the town of Borovsk (40 miles from Moscow), and he sent me to give you his blessing; and he ordered me to reveal to you that *he is the very Serezha before whom Father A. bowed down.*' "

The Era of Optina is past, the Monastery destroyed. But after such a revelation from the Catacombs of enslaved Russia, who can say that the tradition of Optina is dead? Who can even guess what further mysteries of the life of Holy Russia await God's time to be revealed to an unworthy world?

CELL—ATTENDANT BARNABAS

The fate of the afore-mentioned cell-attendant of Elder Anatole, Father Barnabas, after the close of Optina Monastery was similar to all believers of that time. He was arrested, humiliated, tormented and banished somewhere into exile. By 1932 he was ordained hieromonk and served in a tiny wooden chapel on the territory of the St. Sergius Hermitage on the Finnish Bay near the capital. It has since been closed for a long time and has suffered the usual vandalism. Almost nothing remains today of the once famous monastery built up by the young Ignaty Brianchaninov; here St. Herman of Alaska spent his early monastic years prior to moving to Valaam. Fr. Barnabas returned from prison, homeless and infirm, to St. Sergius Hermitage where he was received with love by some kind people. The wound on his amputated leg would not heal, causing him constant and severe suffering. He did not have a false limb and had to use a simple wooden stick which prevented the wound from healing; nevertheless, he did not use either crutches or even a walking cane. There I met him personally and he became my father-confessor.

He was known by the persecuted believers as the last carrier of the Optina spirit—absolute humility and meekness. When he served he was transported into another world. He was obviously clairvoyant, a highly experienced father-confessor to whom the soul of the penitent was opened and he knew how to heal sick and tormented souls.

Father Barnabas came from a peasant family but was well educated. In his youth he worked in some mines where he suffered a catastrophe and lost his leg. When he lay in the hospital he decided to become a monk. God healed him and he went to Optina where he eventually became Elder Anatole's cell-attendant and was vouchsafed to behold the blessed repose of that great Elder. Were it not for the Bolsheviks' closing of Optina with its renowned institution of God—bearing eldership, Father Barnabas would have become a successor elder in his own right. He was truly a man of spiritual insight and his words had power.

He was tall, had a large black beard and his long dark hair on his shoulders was graying. He had a special penetrating gaze; his eyes were dark, kind and shone as if exuding some inward light, especially during the church services. He never smiled but his whole countenance was joyous. His sense of humor was emphasizing simplicity and submission to God's will. He taught complete monastic renunciation of the will.

I remember how I felt during my first confession with him.

In trepidation I knelt before the analogion. For the first time in my life my soul automatically fully opened up. I clearly felt the closeness of the Lord. As the experienced elder posed questions before me, in my memory would arise long-forgotten sins. I admitted that earlier I, a baby in religion, did not even consider them as sins. But here, suddenly, they rose up as grave sins. And my soul, freed from their heavy burden, became winged with light-hearted joy and limitless devotion to the grace-bearing elder. One felt like telling him everything, because he would understand everything in the light of Christ's wisdom and love. He was not only a witness of the confession, but also a transmitter of Light and Grace. This was my first real confession. Only then I understood *what* is confession. The darkness which was enveloping my senses, began to fade away and the laws of spiritual life began to reveal themselves before me. For the first time in my life I began to consciously strive toward the Light. And I was not alone. How many other people did he lead also to that Light!

In the fall of 1932, Father Barnabas was arrested and two years later released. He went into the catacombs—he served Liturgy and received people for confession in his own little one-room cabin. From that time on his true self became revealed in the fullness of its depth. He was indeed a true Optina elder.

In 1938 he was arrested once more and never heard of again. From the information received concerning his whereabouts, it was clear that he met his martyrdom then, in 1938.

Holy Hieromartyr Barnabas pray to God for us.

(Natalia G. von Kieter, manuscript)

HIEROMONK NIKON OF OPTINA

Today was read the Gospel which is appointed to be read on the feasts of monastic saints: this is the Gospel of the Beatitudes. The last Beatitude is: "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold, your reward is great in heaven" (Luke 6:22-23).

As I read this Gospel, I remembered an incident in Optina Monastery. This is the great monastery which was renowned in recent times for its clairvoyant elders.

When the Revolution of evil memory broke out in Russia, and when the God-fighting regime began its fight against religion, a so-called "liquidation commission" was sent to this monastery.

There was a Hieromonk Nikon in the monastery. He had tuberculosis. He read and sang on the cliros. And when this "liquidation commission" began its work, when they began to arrest monks, this Hieromonk Nikon was also arrested. He was the kindest of men. He was condemned, shaved of all the hair on his body, mocked, spat upon, slandered, and in the end he was sent, already a sick man, to a concentration camp. There he died of tuberculosis. He was already in his last days when he wrote a letter to a nun of his acquaintance. (This nun was my mother, and when she read us this letter we children sat and wept as we listened.)

I would like to share this letter with you. He wrote: "There is no limit to my happiness." Why? Because he came to the monastery for the sake of Christ. And the sorrows which he endures, he endures for the sake of Christ. And therefore we have the words of the Saviour that if men will hate and separate you and reproach you for the sake of Christ, He gives a promise: "Rejoice ye and leap for joy, for your reward is infinitely great in heaven." "And so I believe my Lord" (the letter continues), "that these words apply to me also, and therefore I await with impatience that happy moment when I will be dissolved from this corruptible body and will be united with my Lord."

This came to my memory as telling us how to look upon sorrows. If a man endures for the sake of Christ, he will receive a reward. And this is a great source of instruction for our earthly life. It is by many sorrows that we enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And therefore, if someone has any sorrow and bears it for the sake of the Lord with joy, this will be a step into the Kingdom of Heaven. *Bishop Nektary.*

There has been preserved the text of another letter which New-Martyr Nikon sent from Optina Monastery at the time (in the mid-1920's) when the approaching end of its existence was felt by all the brethren there. This deeply-felt, poetic letter, addressed to his sorrowing mother, is all that is left from this marytr.

A LETTER OF HIEROMONK NIKON OF OPTINA TO HIS MOTHER, 1922

Christ is in our midst, dearest mother.

I fervently desire for you peace and joy in the Lord. and I ask your holy prayers and mother's blessing.

About myself, what can I write? I am alive and well. I have no particular needs, I receive everything I need, I labor a little as a secretary, I am very busy with various things in the monastery, or rather. things which touch in general on our common life: I sing on the cliros, and finally I serve, standing before the holy altar of God.

As for my inward life, my cell and my soul, not everyone can know this. My cell is five yards long and three and a half wide. with one window. This cell is dearer to me than any sumptuous houses or halls.

As for the conditions of our common life, this is something which is complicated, but at the same time very simple. complicated, because it is difficult to put on paper what the former monastery is like now, and everything that we are experiencing and doing; but simple. because *except the Lord build the house, in vain do they labor that build it,* in the words of the Psalm (Ps. 126:1). Yes, one must take the measures that are possible, prompted by common sense, which are not contrary to the Christian spirit and monastic life; but, in taking them, one must expect success entirely from the hand of the Lord.

Human pride says: We will do, we will attain—and we begin to build a tower of Babel, we demand of God an accounting for His actions, we desire to have the universe at our disposal, we dream of thrones beyond the clouds—but no one and nothing submits to us, and the powerlessness of man is demonstrated with all apparentness in bitter experience. Observing this experience in the history both of ancient, long-gone days, and of recent times, I have come to the conclusion that the ways of God's Providence are past finding out for us; we cannot understand them, and therefore we must with all humility give ourselves over to the will of God.

Then, secondly: No one and nothing can harm a man if he does not harm himself; on the contrary, if one does not avoid sin, a thousand means of salvation will not help him. Consequently, the only evil is sin: Judas fell while in the presence of the Saviour, but the righteous Lot was saved while living in Sodom. Such and similar thoughts come to me when I take instruction from the reading of the Holy Fathers and when I mentally glance upon my surroundings.

What will happen? How will it happen? When will it happen? If such-and-such happens, which way should one bend? If such-and-such happens, where can one find spiritual strength and consolation? O Lord, Lord! And a fierce perplexity takes hold of the soul when you wish to foresee everything in your mind, to penetrate into the mystery of the future which is unknown but somehow frightful. The mind becomes exhausted, and the plans and methods it has devised are a childish fantasy, a pleasant dream. A man wakes up, and everything has vanished, pushed away by harsh reality, and all one's plans are destroyed. Where is there hope? Our hope is in God.

The Lord is my hope and my refuge. By giving over myself and everything to the will of God, the will of God will be done in me, and it is always good and perfect. If I am God's, then the Lord will defend and console me. If for my benefit some temptation is sent to me—blessed be the Lord Who has arranged my salvation. Even in the midst of sorrows the Lord is mighty to give great and most glorious consolation . . . Thus do I think, thus do I feel, thus do I observe and believe.

From this do not think that I have experienced many sorrows and trials. No, it seems to me that I have not really seen any sorrows yet. If I have gone through things which at a superficial glance seemed to be something sorrowful, they have not caused me any great pain of heart, have not caused any sorrow, and therefore I would not call them sorrows. But I do not close my eyes to what is happening and to the future, so as to prepare my soul for temptation, so that I might say in the words of the Psalm: "I prepared myself and was not disturbed."

I have told you that we had an investigation; they reviewed the business of our association. This investigation is not yet finished, and there has been no trial. When the trial will be, and how it will end—God knows. But, beyond any doubt, without the will of God nothing can happen either to me in particular or to us all in general, and therefore I am calm. And when one's soul is calm, what more can one seek?

Now I have come from the All-night Vigil and am finishing this letter, which I began before the Vigil. O Lord, what happiness! What marvellous words are proclaimed to us in church! Peace and quiet, the spirit of sanctity are sensibly felt in church. The Divine service ends, everyone goes to their homes, and I also come out of church.

A wondrous night, a light frost. The moon with its silvery rays drenches our quiet little corner. I go to the graves of the reposed Elders, bow down to them, ask their help in prayer, and for them I ask of the Lord eternal blessedness in heaven. These graves say much to our mind and heart; from these cold inscriptions there is a breath of warmth. Before the mental gaze of my mind there stand the wondrous images of reposed giants of the spirit.

During these days I have remembered Father Barsanuphius many times. I have remembered his words, the instruction which he gave me once—and perhaps more than once. He told me: "The Apostle exhorts: *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith*" (II Cor. 13:15), and he continued: "Look at what the same apostle says: *I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown* (II Tim. 4:7-8). Yes, it is a great thing to keep, to preserve the faith. Therefore I also tell you: Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith. If you keep the faith, you can have a good hope over your lot."

When the reposed Elder told me all this (and he spoke well, with enthusiasm; as far as I recall it was in the evening, by the quiet light of an icon-lamp in his dear, cozy elder's cell), I felt that he was saying something wondrous, exalted, spiritual. My mind and heart seized on his words with eagerness. I had heard this utterance of the Apostle before, but it had not produced in me such a response, such an impression.

It seemed to me that "keeping the faith" was something special. I believe, and I believe in the Orthodox way; I have no doubts at all regarding faith. But here I felt that in this utterance there was something great—that indeed it is great, in spite of all temptations, all the experiences of life, all the offending things, to keep in one's heart the fire of holy faith unquenched, and unquenched even until death, for it is said: *I have finished my course*, that is, the whole of earthly life has already been lived, finished, the path which one had to travel has already been travelled, I am already at the boundary of earthly life, beyond the grave another life already begins, the life which has been prepared for me by my faith which I have kept. *I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*. And my wondrous Elder gave as his testament to me to test myself from time to time in the truths of the Orthodox faith, lest I might, unnoticed by myself, deviate from them. He advised me, among other things, to read the Orthodox Catechism of Metropolitan Philaret and to become acquainted with the "Confession of the Orthodox Faith of the Eastern Patriarchs."

Now, when the foundations of the Orthodox Russian Church have been shaken, I see how precious is this instruction of the Elder. Now, it seems, the time of testing has come, to see whether we are in the faith. Now one must also know that the faith can be kept by one who believes warmly and sincerely, to whom God is dearer than everything, and this latter can be true only in one who preserves himself from every sin, who preserves his moral life. O Lord, keep me in the faith by Thy grace!

The idea that the faith can be kept only with a good moral life is not my own; this is the teaching also of the Gospel and the Holy Fathers. Here is what it says in the Holy Gospel according to St. John, 3:19-21: *Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

Christ here calls Himself the Light. He tries to persuade the Jews of His time to abandon the search for honor from each other, while doing which a man is incapable of faith; but they only mocked . . . *How can ye believe,which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?* (John 5:44).

And Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, indicating these words of the Gospel, says that. like other passions, the passion of vainglory annihilates faith in the human heart: like them, it makes the human heart incapable of faith in Christ, of confessing Christ . . . Therefore, I fervently entreat your holy prayers, that the Lord might preserve me from every evil—that is, from sin in all its forms—and then no outward situation will be able to harm me.

I only wished to tell you briefly that I am alive and well and, beyond my intentions, I was drawn into writing this. In writing this letter, I have scarcely been able to follow my thoughts and record what they have dictated to me. All this has somehow involuntarily poured out of my pen, and it represents my profound conviction.

May the Lord preserve us all.

I ask the holy prayers of all, and I myself, according to my own infirm powers, will always remember everyone in prayer. Forgive me.

May the grace of our Lord and God Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

November 15-16/28-29, 1922. Optina Monastery.
It is already two o'clock at night.

MONK-MARTYR VINCENT

Father Vincent was born in Petersburg in a well-to-do clerk's family by the name of Nikolsky. He completed law school and became interested in philosophy—to such an extent that it gripped his thoughts and feelings. At that time he was far from Christ and His Church. Just then one of his brothers died unexpectedly. This had a profound effect upon his life. The first thing that came to mind was to commit suicide. He was studying Neitzche who, in a sense, whispered this idea into his ear. The only thing holding him back was his love for his mother. He wanted to prepare her for this and, therefore, secretly left home and hid on his family's estate where during wintertime no one lived. His parents, however, found out where he was and sent an old relative, a nun, to him. As if accidentally, upon the table in the room where Father Vincent was hiding, she left a book by Bishop Theophan the Recluse—*What is Spiritual Life and How Does One Attain It.* Father Vincent read this book and with enthusiasm began to read the other writings of Bishop Theophan. Soon he became acquainted with the Archbishop of Tula and Belyov, Partheny (Levitski) whom Father Vincent remembered with special gratitude, considering him an ascetic and a truly humble monk. Vladika Partheny directed him to go to Optina Hermitage.

Father Vincent came to Optina when Archimandrite Xenophont was the abbot. His first monastic obediences were working in the kitchen and reading out loud the monastic rule to the already sick Archimandrite Xenophont. The guidance of his spiritual life was in the hands of Father Nektary who, after the repose of Elder Joseph, was selected to be the spiritual father of all the brethren and the monastery elder. Father Nektary was a doer of the Jesus Prayer. He was taught the Jesus Prayer by the great Elder Anatole (Zertsalov). The mental activity of the Jesus Prayer—when one acquires the habit of walking in the remembrance of the Name of God—became the tone of the whole life of Father Vincent. This inward activity was the determining factor in his life. All external things were viewed from this all-encompassing, spiritually refined way of life. Nothing else in his life interested him. He had only one aim—to abide in the Name of the Lord. He was always filled with joy. He encountered no difficulty in the monastery obediences since the main task was the acquisition of spiritual sobriety. He worked in the bakery, the prosphora bakery, in the office and, much to his liking, he was often sent to get the mail. From the monastery to the post-office in Kozelsk it was almost four miles. These eight miles (there and back) were filled with great joy, for during this time he fulfilled his obedience to his elder concerning sobriety and prayer.

In this period of his life the Revolution occurred. The young monk did not wish to leave in those first difficult years of the Revolution when the monastery was being gradually torn apart. According to Father Vincent, his father, a dignitary, did not want him to enter the monastery. He was very disappointed that his son had thrown away the possibility of rising up in the secular world. But in the turbulent years of the Revolution, his father wrote him a letter:

"Father Vincent, (in such a way did he address his son) how you were right! Oh, how I wish I could change my already spent life. How I wish that from my youth I had accepted your way of life. I am dying and, looking towards my grave, I weep. An unworthy slave of Christ." This letter of a father to his son gave strength to Father Vincent at a time when the wave of the Revolution was destroying monasteries, and causing their inhabitants to seek some other shelter. Father Vincent did not seek anything. He was, as before, in obedience to his elder and conducted his own spiritual work. At this time, Optina Monastery was looking for places to sent her monks. Elder Nektary sent Father Vincent to a parish priest, Father Adrian Rymarenko, so that under the protection of the parish church the life of the monk-ascetic might be preserved. This priest, who in America became Archbishop Andrew, later wrote concerning Fr. Vincent:

"The Lord enabled us to behold a candle burning before God....It is difficult to say what this monk spent his time doing. I can only say that now I weep, remembering the past. I know that I didn't always know how to cherish this refined and polished vessel of the grace of God....For the two years he stayed with us, he was not once of his own accord outside the gate of the church. Not once did he sit at the table at trapeza. He never conversed with anyone for the sake of his own interest. He never pushed upon anyone his own ideas. The whole time he was with us one could sense in him the power of God.

"The godless authorities who arrested and sent him away from me, treated him peculiarly. It seemed that they feared his sanctity. He was sent, like I was, on 'administrative exile'. Automatically the thought came to me: how would he survive the approaching trials? Father Vincent wrote his elder a letter in the style of a Soviet person—it sounded like nonsense: he asked the elder to bless him to be a pauper. In the Soviet Union there was no place for a pauper. The elder blessed him. I know that the Lord did not abandon his slave. Nor did our parishioners forget him; they sent him parcels of food and other necessary things.

"In 1933 he returned from his first exile and arrived in Kozelsk at the time of the common arrest of the last Optina monks. He was arrested again and exiled to Tashkent. There, in the first month of his exile, according to the authorities, he died from some obscure disease. I know that before he was arrested one of our Kievan monks visited him while he was still in Kozel and told me that he was living in a small cabin that reminded one of a cave. Utter poverty. Deprivation. Yet at that moment he was a rich man—only his riches were not earthly, but heavenly. He was already prepared to die as a monk-martyr.

Before the final dispersion of the monks, Archimandrite Xenophont asked Father Vincent if he would accept ordination to the priesthood. Father Vincent was obedient but told Father Archimandrite that if he would ask him what he desired, then he would reply that he cared to remain a simple monk. Archimandrite Xenophont decided then to grant his wish. And thus, Father Vincent was never ordained; he remained his entire life as a simple monk.

O, holy monk-martyr Vincent, pray to God for us.

Sources: M. Polsky, *The New Martyrs of Russia,* Vol. II, p. 220.

18

Bishop Arcadius

SHEPHERD OF CATACOMB LAY BROTHERHOODS

Commemorated January 26 (†1938)

> *Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head. And He said unto another, Follow Me.* Luke 9:58-59

ONE OF SUCH literal followers of Christ in our own days was a humble shepherd of Christ's flock, bearing the name of Arcadius, which in Greek means "shepherd." He was born in January, 1888, and in holy Baptism was given the name of St. Arcadius, the son of Sts. Xenophon and Maria, whose memory is kept on January 26. His father, Presbyter Joseph Ostalsky, was arrested in 1919 and, after becoming ill with typhus, was released from prison and soon died. His mother, Sophia Pavlovna, was a pious woman and spiritually supported her son to the very end of her life.

Having prepared himself for the service of the Church, the young man married and became a priest, being pastor of the church in the town of Old Constantinovo. As a young priest he arrived in my town of Zhitomir straight from the front in 1917 and received a small church in the center of town. There he organized a brotherhood of laymen in the spirit of the early Christians. His wife, however, being of worldly interests, left him and married a Bolshevik. Father Arcadius quietly gave her a divorce and lived himself with his mother. This freed Father Arcadius to devote himself entirely to church work and to his flock. With zeal and the strength of youth, he turned his attention to the defense of the Orthodox Faith, attracting great numbers of the faithful with his flaming sermons. He celebrated church services every morning and evening. And these fervent, apostolic services supplied a stream of burning joy and faith for the souls of the persecuted Christians. He was all

Bishop Arcadius

Bishop Stephen
of St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra

aflame. He never rested and never thought of himself. To such an extent was he selfless that he was able to give to the first beggar anything he had. The bleak Soviet reality with its ever increasing poverty and overwhelming deprivation of the very essentials of life, gave, of course, ample opportunity for a Christ-loving pastor to extend charity. Seeing an impoverished man on a cold night with his pants ripped, Arkady would not hesitate a minute to give him his own. And since he always wore his riasson and cassok, he could easily get away with it undetected. His mother, however, would discover his art of philanthropy in doing his laundry and often would jokingly tell her neighbors—"Last night Arkasha again came home without his pants."

Father Arcadius had a great power of prayer. In our church during the services there were no conversations or moving about; everyone prayed with concentration, just as Batiushka did in the Altar. Often everyone in church would fall to their knees spontaneously. Everyone would sing.

The persecution of the Church increased with every year, and the devoted pastor endured great trials, going from one danger to another. The Cheka persecuted the faithful; everywhere churches were being closed and the faithful were fired from work just because of their religious convictions. And Father Arcadius, burning constantly with heavenly fire, drew to himself more and more of the faithful and united them in a single-minded devotion to God.

He at once organized brotherhoods of laymen for bringing Christian work to the suffering Russian people. I was a member of the St. Nicholas Brotherhood. We were all burning with zeal and enthusiasm. Those who wanted to join the brotherhoods were solemnly received by giving their vow to carry out the aims of the brotherhood, which required, first of all, devotion to the purity of Orthodoxy — never to renounce it, even under threat of death; secondly, the wearing of modest attire; then fasting, and so on. The acceptance into the brotherhood was conducted very solemnly. Everyone had to make the necessary preparation for Confession and the reception of Holy Communion. Then everyone would remain in church, and before the reading of the Gospel we had to repeat the words spoken by Father Arcadius — the rules of the brotherhood — and to confirm them with a vow. We were then all given large lighted candles, which we were to treasure until death. Afterwards we would receive Holy Communion.

In our Brotherhood there were several groups: one was a missionary group, conducted by Father Arcadius himself, whose aim was to fight sectarians, atheists, and the Living Church; then there was a group of singers; a group which visited hospitals, taking care of the lonely and sick and those poor people who had many children; then a burial group, whose duties were not only to bury the faithful and see that they received the Church's burial service, bur also to obtain and deliver coffins to the grave; and since the times were very hard, often we had to drag the coffins on little carts or sleighs to the cemetery, and even dig the grave. Don't forget what extremely difficult years those were! Then there was also a philanthropical group.

At first Father Arcadius had two churches: a small one dedicated to the Annunciation, and a larger one dedicated to the Three Holy Hierarchs, which was formerly a seminary church, the other buildings of the seminary being occupied by the secular authorities. When the Brotherhood became too conspicuous for the authorities, its members were fortunate enough to obtain a former Old Believers' church, dedicated to St. Ignatius the God-bearer, where we managed to exist until 1937; bur that year the church was closed and the members of the Brotherhood began to gather around the cemetery church. The Brotherhood had two priests: Father Julian Krasitsky, who was later forced to flee; and Father John Sirov, who stayed to the very end and secretly conducted church needs. Thus, my child was baptized by him in 1939, even though for conducting church services one would be immediately exiled. But God protected him, and I was in contact with Father John until the coming of the Germans.

In 1921 there came the order of Patriarch Tikhon forbidding the giving of church vessels into the hands of unbelievers, especially the Holy Chalices, which had been blessed with the grace of God. Father Arcadius, as a devoted son of the Church, followed the Patriarch's appeal and would not give over the Church's valuables. But the satanic authority was doing its evil deeds. One day, right after the Divine Liturgy, Father Arcadius was arrested by Cheka agents. That was in 1922, during the Bright Week of Pascha. When the Chekists took him, the whole mass of people moved together with the arrested Father Arcadius to the Cheka building. Then the Cheka soldiers took rifles and yelled with hatred: "Everyone go home or we will start shooting!" Everyone was silent, clinging to one another, holding their breath. And then, out stepped a nun by the name of Seraphima and bravely said: "No! We will not leave until you release our Father Arcadius or arrest us all together with him." Then the soldiers put down their rifles and did not push us away, and we formed a wall; so they began to push us into the Cheka building. But since the crowd was enormous, they began to close the dours, and thus they arrested 35 women and 17 men. They put us in the basement of that building. Our choir leader was there, so instantly that dark building was filled with Paschal singing. Then they took us out and pushed us into the yard near the garage, and began to conduct us, one by one, to be interrogated; and then we were pushed out into the street. We were given a statement to sign which said that Father Arcadius had started a riot, but not one person signed it. Then a note was added to that statement, indicating that the people themselves had refused to leave their spiritual father. And this every single person signed individually, as if by mutual consent. Among those imprisoned were young girls about 16 years old, including myself, and we also signed.

The news of Father Arcadius' arrest was instantly spread throughout the city, and the Cheka building was besieged by an endless amount of food parcels for the arrested ones. Thus all of the arrested ones were fed with these parcels, as well as the guards.

In the meantime, Father Arcadius was tried for the uprising, and then for refusal to give up church valuables. At the open trial many witnesses were called. They all said the same thing, speaking of Father Arcadius as a fine man, an unmercenary, a priest who had devoted his whole life solely to the service of God and men. Many examples were brought forth of his goodness and exceptional self-sacrifice. There was no evidence against him at all. But the judge, who was young and very proud and self-assured, with cynical frankness declared that the whole description of Father Arcadius given by the witnesses was not a justification of him, but rather constituted an increase of the accusation which had been made against him; for the ideas which he so warmly preached and put into practice contradicted the ideals of the Soviet regime, and such people were not merely unnecessary to the Soviet government, but were extremely harmful to it.

At first Father Arcadius was condemned to death, but then he was given ten years in prison. He was imprisoned for five years in our town of Zhitomir, which made his lot somewhat easier, since there was constant contact between him and our Brotherhood. In prison he gained the love not only of the prisoners, but also of the jailors and guards, and thanks to this he managed several times to give Holy Communion to the condemned, who were then led out to be shot. He saved many souls. And, of course, the food given to him by our Brotherhood helped his fellow-prisoners.

After his release, in 1927, Father Arcadius went to Petrograd for a meeting with *our* (Catacomb) hierarchs, and from there he made a pilgrimage to Sarov. There the closeness to the great Saint Seraphim made him decide to embrace monasticism. He returned to Petrograd, received the monastic tonsure, and soon was made bishop by the hands of Metropolitan Joseph himself, the actual founder and head of the Catacomb Church. He was made a vicar of the Poltava diocese, but he never saw his diocese. On the way to his flock, having arrived in the city of Lubin, he was arrested and sent to Kazan, from where he managed to escape, living in hiding for a long time in Petrograd, secretly celebrating Divine services at the Kiev-Caves Metochion and inspiring Catacomb brotherhoods.

Then he left for Moscow, where he was arrested and put into the infamous Butyrka prison, being later banished to the Solovki concentration camp. A witness recalls Bishop Arcadius' triumphant celebration of Divine Liturgy in Moscow: the church was filled with light, and amidst a multitude of loving and eagerly-listening believers stood the young pastor-hierarch, and everywhere there was spiritual joy, beauty and exalted prayer. And then, suddenly — a dreary night at the railroad depot — his exile to Solovki. Through a crowd of women, standing alone, who had gathered to see him off, a group of armed Red Army soldiers conducted Bishop Arcadius to a prison car fenced with barbed wire, and then there was the last glimpse of the beloved shepherd as he thrice blessed them through the grating of a dimly-lit window of the moving train. When he returned from Solovki, he was already an almost unrecognizable, gray-haired old man.

The president of our Brotherhood, Natalia Ivanovna Orzhevskaya, and others went all the way to Solovki in order to receive permission to see him, but they were not allowed even to receive a blessing from him. In a large room two rows of tables were placed. At one row of tables the visitors were seated, at the other, the prisoners. Between them a whole crowd of guards were constantly walking back and forth, making such noise that one literally had to scream in order to be heard. And, of course, they were not allowed to approach for a blessing because of the "danger of infection." Years later, Bishop Arcadius related that they proposed to him that he remain voluntarily at Solovki occupying a position as cashier, and that they even promised to stop the constant spying and watching over him — provided that he would renounce the rank of priest; but he preferred life in total deprivation, keeping in his heart the Lord God.

After being released from Solovki, Bishop Arcadius was deprived of the usual Soviet identity permit, without which one's very existence becomes illegal, and this doomed him to constant homeless wanderings. Secretly, however, he managed to travel around and visit the brethren of his Catacomb brotherhoods. Several times he visited his mother in Zhitomir, where his arrivals were a great inspiration and support, both for the clergy and for us sinners.

Factually our St. Nicholas Brotherhood was deprived of regular leadership after 1922, but we managed to continue up to 1937, when the last church was closed and the Brotherhood, of course, was not registered, but the remainder of our members continued to gather in the cemetery chapel. In 1934 Bishop Arcadius secretly visited Kiev and saw Schema-bishop Anthony. In his wanderings, which were mostly at night so as not to arouse suspicion, he had contacts even in Georgia and Siberia; but then once again he was arrested in the town of Rylsk. His whole life was one of suffering for Christ. Hardly would he return from one exile than within a month he would be arrested and again exiled. There was not much difference between freedom and exile.

At the time when he gave his monastic vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, he was given as his patron St. Arcadius of Viazma and Novotorzhsk.* St. Arcadius, a fool for Christ of ancient Holy Russia, led a life of homeless wanderings, often praying on a certain huge rock. Now, being in his wanderings a new homeless Arcadius of crucified Holy Russia, could he fail to stop at the site of his Saint's Monastery in the town of Viazma? And venerating the rock upon which the ancient ascetic had knelt in prayer, the modern confessor had to realize that he was deprived even of a cold rock upon which he could stay to rest for a while and pray.

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* Commemorated Jan. 28, June 11, and Aug. 14.

Once, when his strength was undermined from this constant loneliness, homelessness and fear for the next day, being secretly in Moscow, Bishop Arcadius was tempted to visit Metropolitan Sergius. In order to see the Metropolitan, one had to go through great difficulties and dangers. And when he finally saw Metropolitan Sergius and told him about his situation, the latter, not listening to him, abruptly asked: "Did you register with the GPU? Until you are registered there, I will not speak with you." When Vladika Arcadius was walking out of the Metropolitan's office, he noted that both Metropolitan Sergius and all his clergy were well fed and wore clean clothing, and when he looked around at the people who were waiting outside the office in hope of seeing the Metropolitan in order to get help and encouragement, being themselves destitute and miserable, he understood that his path was different, and that he had to return to his hapless wandering. And so he left...

Above him was a wide starry sky; in his heart there was peace. He was in the blissful state of being deprived of everything that a man can possess. But that something which was burning in his pastoral heart, no one could take away from him! For he was a shepherd of Christ's catacomb flock and was aflame with zeal for pure Orthodoxy — and he bravely marched on and on, distributing the Bread of Life to his brethren in Christ, scattered like the stars above him over the wide horizon of the Russian land. Thus, finally, in 1938 he was spotted in the territory of the wide Volga River, in the city of Kostroma, was thereupun arrested, and was never heard of again. Those were the years of the Ezhov purge, when many perished without a trace and when the Catacomb Church went deep underground, hiding any trace of its existence — until the time pleasing to God, when from within its bosom will shine forth through the whole world the blazing glory of Russia's Catacomb Saints...

Holy New Hieromartyr Arcadius, pray to God for us!

Sources: This account was compiled from materials supplied to the St. Herman Brotherhood by Bishop Arcadius' spiritual daughter, Irene Mashin, who also supplied the photographs and gave corrections to chapter 8 of Polsky's *Russia's New Martyrs*, vol. II, pp. 84-87.

19

Bishop Andrew of Ufa

HIERARCH OF "THE CHURCH OF THE WILDERNESS"

Commemorated December 26 (†1937)

> *And I will make with them a*
> *covenant of peace...and they shall*
> *dwell securely in the wilderness,*
> *and sleep in the woods. And I will*
> *make them and the places round about*
> *my hill a blessing...*
>
> Ezekiel 34:25-26

BISHOP ANDREW, in the world Alexander Ukhtomsky (from the Tartar kinship of Prince Ukhtomsky) was born on December 26, 1872. He received a higher education together with his brother Alexis, who later became a renowned scientist, in the Moscow Seminary Academy at first under the direction of Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), the future Metropolitan and First Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, and later under Archbishop Arsenius (Stradnitsky) who became the Metropolitan of Novgorod. Both of these outstanding hierarchs were advanced at the Council of 1917-18 as candidates for the Patriarchal throne. After finishing the academy, the young Alexander, then 23 years old, became a monk and four years later, he was ordained a hieromonk.

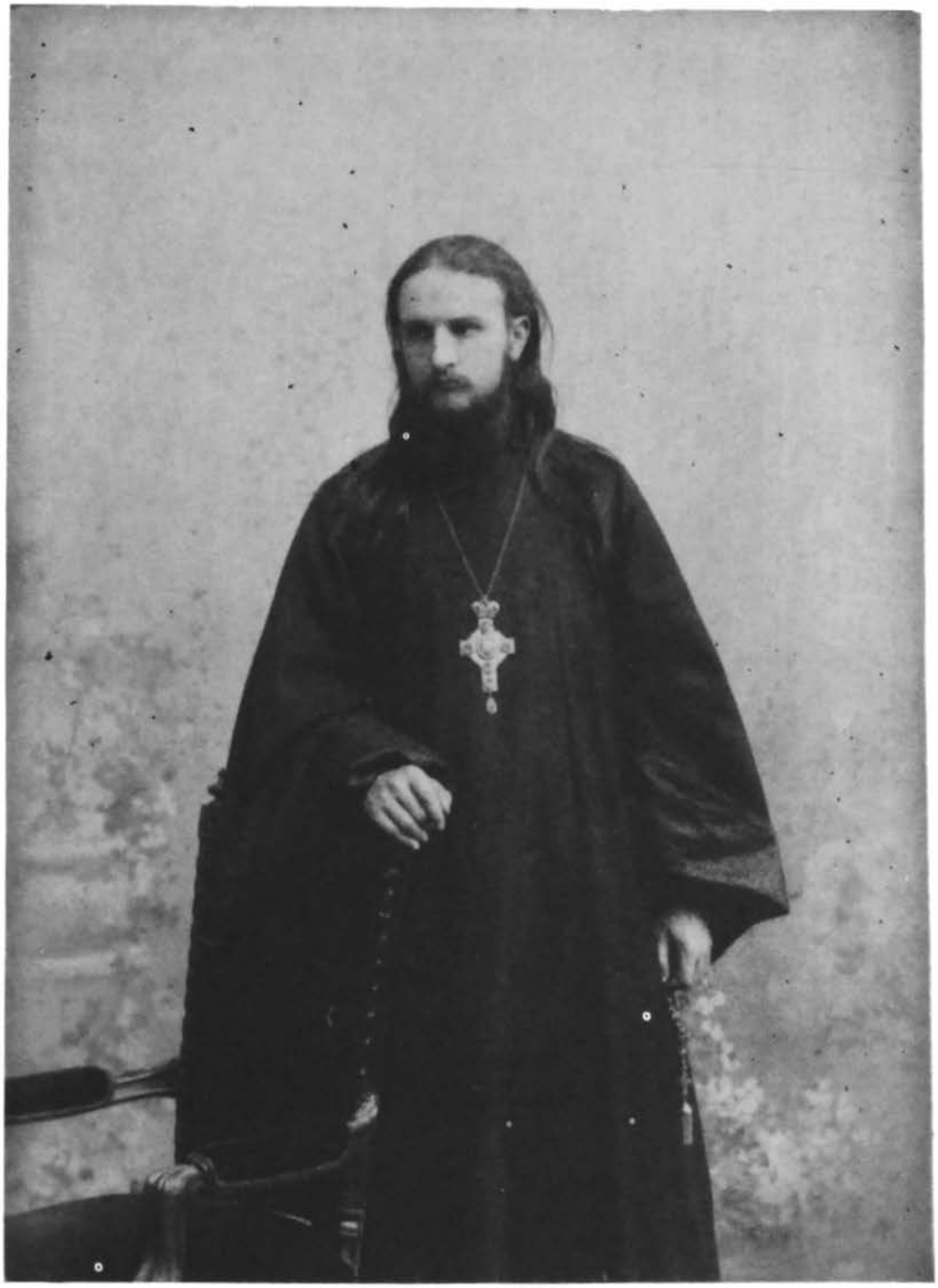
Subsequently, in his sermon before his consecration, Valdika Andrew recalled with what fear he, a young hieromonk, took upon himself this responsibility:

"I have suffered awesome torments ever since I first heard these words found in the rite for the consecration of a bishop: 'Take this Covenant (the Body of Christ) and keep it whole and untainted until your last breath—to Whom you must give an account at the great and terrible Second Coming of our Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.' I thought, 'How can I preserve this great Covenant, which was entrusted to me, the Body of Christ, if I cannot even preserve myself?' I felt then that the Holy Mysteries of the Eucharist were, indeed, a fire burning the unworthy. For two whole years I found no peace, performing the Holy Mysteries in fear and trembling on account of my unworthiness, ready to forsake that terrible and awesome calling. But a meeting with the great Father John of Kronstadt saved my soul from further bitterness, torment and the prolongation of the almost sickening duel in my soul. When I asked him for counsel on this matter, Father John said, 'Yes, we are all guilty before the Holy Mysteries, but we must be true to our priestly calling for we are in obedience to the Holy Church. Weeping over our own sins, we must, however, do the will of Christ's Church and follow the instructions of the Church which are made known to us through our Archpastors.'

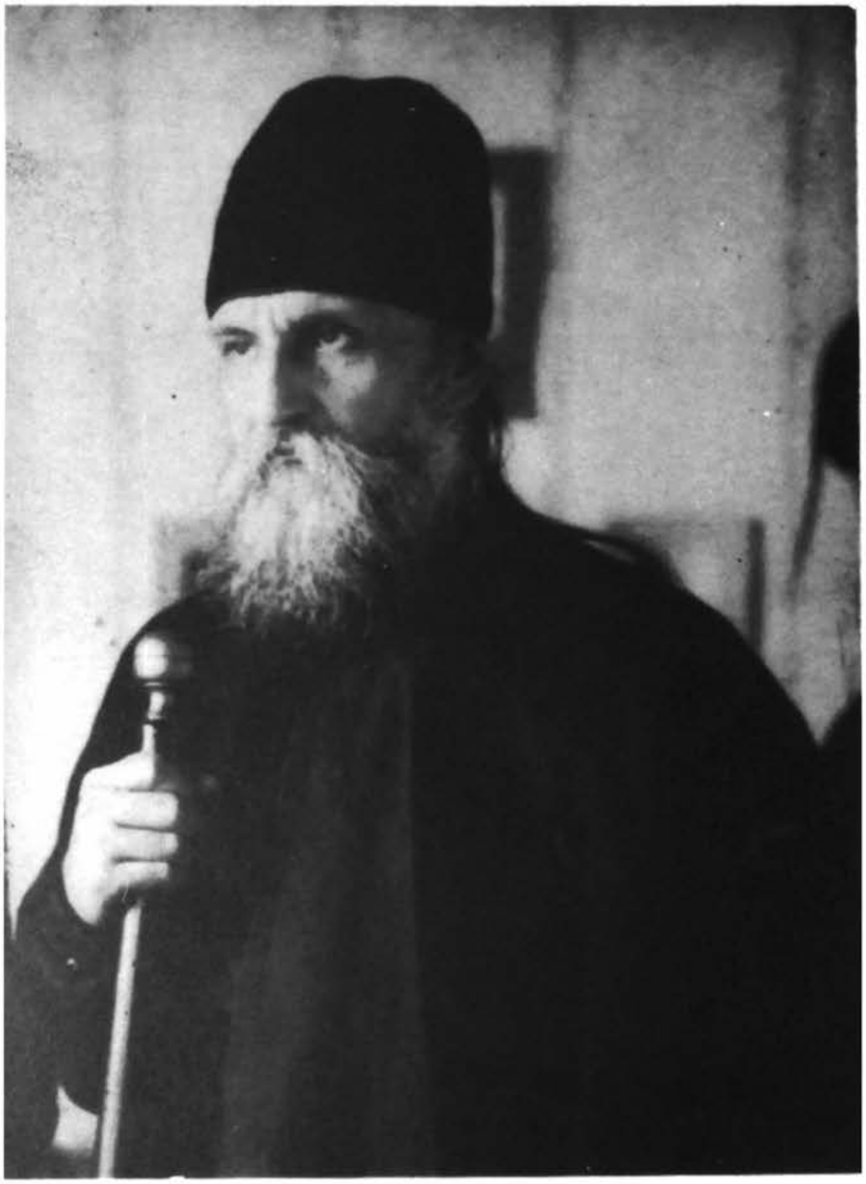
These words of Father John were, in truth, a soothing balm for my wounded and sinful soul which had been torn by various doubts; they made my outlook on life whole and indicated my path in life; I began to understand it only as the most precise fulfillment of obedience to the Church, as the most perfect way of serving the Holy Church, a nation of God, and the people of God who have been redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ." (Supplement to the "Church News" for 1907, No. 49.)

In 1899 he was raised to the rank of archimandrite and was appointed as inspector of the Kazan missionary school.

He began his work of Orthodox enlightenment in his native Kazan as a young hieromonk, being in charge of a seminary and a missionary school, highly respected and loved by all. He soon became a popular figure for his deeds of mercy to the poor and needy and for his asceticism. It was known that he spent his nights in prayer, using a hard bed with no blanket or pillow for his brief rest. In the midst of his social activity he always fasted, never eating even fish. When his wealthy admirers presented him with crates of fresh fruit he immediately gave it away to seminarians and children. People were astonished to see him eat only two or three prosphora and a few glasses of tea a day, never complaining of frailty or loss of energy, yet his activity was enormous. When raised to the rank of archimandrite he became abbot of the ancient Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Kazan, ably governing it, delivered flaming sermons, founded a convent for Tatar girls, was an excellent spiritual advisor, published a magazine and booklets, and organized missionary conferences.



Bishop Andrew of Ufa as Archimandrite in Kazan



Bishop Andrew already in mature years

Before long he was consecrated bishop of Mamadynsk, a vicariate of the Kazan diocese, continuing the same duties. Once in the revolutionary year of 1905 the workers of a gunpowder factory eight miles from Kazan rose up in revolt, as a result of Communist propaganda, and killed one of the eight directors of the factory. A barrel of explosives was blown up, breaking all windows in the nearby houses. Bishop Andrew immediately mounted a horse and, fearlessly risking his life, galloped to the factory. There he mounted a high place and silently waited for the mob to quiet down. They laughed at him, cursed, threw handfuls of dirt and rotten apples; but he stood quietly, looking at the mob and praying silently. The mob, seeing him fearless and peaceful, gradually calmed down; and then Vladika began to talk. His talk was short, but so powerful that the whole mob came to repentance, realizing what a sin they had committed in killing an innocent man. They released the other directors and resumed work, after accompanying Bishop Andrew with great respect back to his monastery quarters.

Bishop Andrew was transferred to Sukhumi in the Caucasus, but before long he returned as bishop of the diocese of Ufa, northeast of Kazan, where there was a large Moslem population. He did his missionary work well, travelling extensively, and was known and loved throughout Russia. Sensing the approaching revolution, he called all Orthodox faithful to join together behind the anointed of God, the Tsar; but at the same time he was outspoken in his opposition to the rich exploiters of the poor and showed himself to be a faithful disciple of Metropolitan Anthony in criticizing the Synodal system of church government and calling for the restoration of the Patriarchate.

When the revolution broke out he hoped for changes for the better even from the Bolsheviks, but soon recognizing their true nature he began to call for the formation of an Orthodox "regiment" of seminary students. He was soon arrested, and although he was released several times he was never actually free again, being simply moved about from prison to prison, from one exile to another.

Nonetheless, the people did not forget him, and many managed to see him in prison or deliver food parcels to him; and every time he was released and returned to his flock, it would cause a whole "event" among the people. The Secret Police sought to use his popularity as bait to fish out the more fervent church people, but Bishop Andrew was so cautious and prudent in his behavior that these attempts always failed.

Bishop Andrew's fight against the false "renovation" of the "Living Church" was noteworthy. It brought true martyrs' crowns to some of his co-workers and spiritual children; the story of one of these, the young student Valentina, has reached the Free World. But his greatest service to the Church was his valiant battle for the truth against "Sergianism" by openly proclaiming it a betrayal of the Church and a trap for the faithful; and in this battle his voice, thanks to his popularity, was widely heard. When the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius was issued in 1927, announcing the "concordat" with the Soviet government and promising various freedoms, Vladika Andrew was in exile far away in the Askhabad region; but even from there he rang the alarm for the faithful. He called on people not to believe Metropolitan Sergius and to separate from him, foretelling that all the "promises" would be broken and a worse enslavement would follow. At first, as a former resident of Ufa testifies, reality seemed to contradict the voice of the much-respected hierarch, and the number of his followers diminished. But in a short time his influence and authority were restored and his followers took the lead in church life in the Ufa region. Early in 1930, within a few months twice as many churches were closed as had been closed for the whole time before the "legalization" of Sergius; taxes on the Church rose five times over; all the church people who had been released from prisons for accepting the "Declaration" were arrested again; and, in a word, the Sergianists did not gain a thing, while losing their freedom of conscience. To this unfortunate group of Sergianists belonged Bishop Andrew's successor in the Ufa diocese, Bishop John, whom Vladika Andrew had consecrated at great peril.

The faithful now came to see clearly that Bishop Andrew was right, and he took the leadership of the underground Church in the Ufa region, leading it into the deep "wilderness." This Church began a life and activity that can only be compared with those of the historic catacomb Church of the first Christians. People gathered to pray in caves, in forests, in desolate farmhouses before daybreak. Between periods of arrest and exile, Bishop Andrew would strengthen the Church, consecrating bishops and priests and inspiring saints to go to a martyrdom equal to that of the great martyrs of the early Church. In particular, the New Martyr Lydia has been accepted as a canonized saint by the Catacomb Church. Even before the death of Patriarch Tikhon, Bishop Andrew had united several groups of Old Believers to the Orthodox Church, and now they too joined the Catacomb Church, which, spiritually free, continued to grow, much to the agitation of her enemies. "Many do not believe that there are catacombs," concludes a witness from Ufa. "Let them disbelieve. The existence of the spiritual world also is denied by the foolish, but because of this it does not cease to exist. It seems the persecution of the last Christians surpasses that of the first Christians."

ABOUT THE LAST period of Bishop Andrew's life we have this account of a fellow prisoner: "In May, 1932, I was transferred from the inner prison of the GPU to the hospital of the isolation wing, scurvy ward, of Butyrka prison. Within two days Bishop Andrew of Ufa, who had been brought to Moscow from banishment in Uzbekistan, where he had finished his term, was transferred from the venereal ward to this ward. Before this transfer, Bishop Andrew had been kept from February, 1932, to May 1st in the inner prison of the GPU in solitary confinement, and then for four days he had been kept—supposedly because there was no other place— in the second ward of Butryka prison, the ward of the psychologically ill; then for several days he had been kept in the fifth (venereal) ward, and finally he was transferred to the fourth (scurvy) ward, since in fact he was ill of scurvy. In 1919 I had been with Bishop Andrew in the Omsk prison. But now he was unrecognizable; only a little hair remained on his head and face, almost all of it having fallen out as a result of scurvy; he had become completely grey, decrepit, so thin that he could not be recognized; but he was still as ever humble, encouraging, good, responsive. At the present time he was accused of organizing Orthodox communities [i.e. of the Catacomb Church], which was against Soviet law, and of agitation and propaganda against Bolshevism. Evenings in the prison Vladika Andrew would usually hold everyone's attention with his stories, and it should be said that he had such an effect on the prisoners around him that even the criminals, disgraced Communists, and others never dared to swear and curse in his presence. Bishop Andrew reacted actively and openly to all the injustices in prison (for which many times he was deprived of parcels which had been sent him by friends outside). The chief priest of Soviet Russia, the head of the Moscow Orthodox Church, Bishop Andrew referred to as a betrayer of Christ. To prison, banishment, and other misfortunes he responded calmly, philosophically reserved, and he suffered more for those around him than for himself. On his fellow prisoners he had an encouraging influence. Large parcels would be sent him as the local residents quickly found out from the prison personnel concerning his arrival at a place of imprisonment. The parcels were not always given to him, but those he recieved he shared with those who had none. He was executed by shooting in the Yaroslavl isolation prison in 1937."

And thus the earthly life of Bishop Andrew was ended, his voice silenced, his grave a hole together with hundreds of other such victims buried beneath the nightmare dungeons of the dark world of Soviet atheism. But the memory of him remains vivid, fresh, and fragrant with the spiritual beauty of a true Christian martyr. The image of a Tatar prince who became a monk in order to preach spiritual freedom with Christ even in the catacombs is indeed inspiring and alive today more than ever. On the back of a portrait given in 1912 to some person afflicted with grief his hand inscribed three short words of encouragement, which come down to us today as full of meaning as if from the better world where he is now: *"I weep, love, and pray."*

Sources (all in Russian): *Theological Encyclopedia,* Vol. VII, 1906, article "Kazan"; *Orthodox Russia,* 1948, No. 3; 1949, Nos. 8-9; 1952, Nos. 5 and 9; 1981, No. 5. *Orthodox Life:* 1966, No. 6. Polsky, *The New Martyrs of Russia,* Vol. II, p. 250. Unpublished letters and manuscripts of Rev. N. Deputatoff, Abbess Juliana, Nun Tabitha, Prof. S.V. Grotov, Rev. M. Polsky. M. Popovsky, "Protopov Avvakum of the 20th Century," *Russian Life,* August 19, 1981. *Nadezhda,* No. 3, 1979.

20

The New Martyr Lydia

AND WITH HER SOLDIERS CYRIL AND ALEXI

Commemorated July 20 (†1928)

> *For Thy sake we are killed all*
> *day long; we were accounted*
> *as sheep for the slaughter.*
> Rom. 8:36

LYDIA, THE DAUGHTER of a priest in the city of Ufa, was born on March 20, 1901. From childhood she was sensitive, affectionate, loved by all, fearing sin and everything forbidden by God. Upon completing girls' school, at nineteen she married and lost her husband in the civil war with the departure of the White Army.

Her father, from the very beginning of the schism of the "Renovators," organized by the Bolsheviks in 1922, joined the schism. The daughter, prostrating herself at her father's feet, said: "Bless me, father, to leave you, so that I will not bind you in the salvation of your soul." The old priest knew his daughter, just as he was aware of the wrongness of his action. He wept and, blessing Lydia for an independent life, prophetically said to her: "See, daughter, when you will win your crown, that you tell the Lord that although I myself proved too weak for battle (*podvig*), still I did not restrain you, but blessed you." "I will, Papa," she said, kissing his hand, thus herself also prophetically foreseeing her future.

Lydia succeeded in entering the Forestry Department, and in 1926 she was transferred to the Collective Lumber Industry for work with the lowest-paid laborers. Here she immediately came into contact with simple Russian people, whom she warmly loved and who responded in the same fashion.

The lumberjacks and drivers, who had been hardened by the work under difficult conditions, related with amazement that in the office of the Lumber Department, where Lydia met them, a feeling came over them similar to the one, now almost smothered, which they had felt when before the Revolution they had gone to meet a venerated icon of the Mother of God from the village of Bogorodskoye near Ufa. In the office foul language, insults, and quarrels were no longer heard. Evil passions were extinguished, and people became kinder to each other.

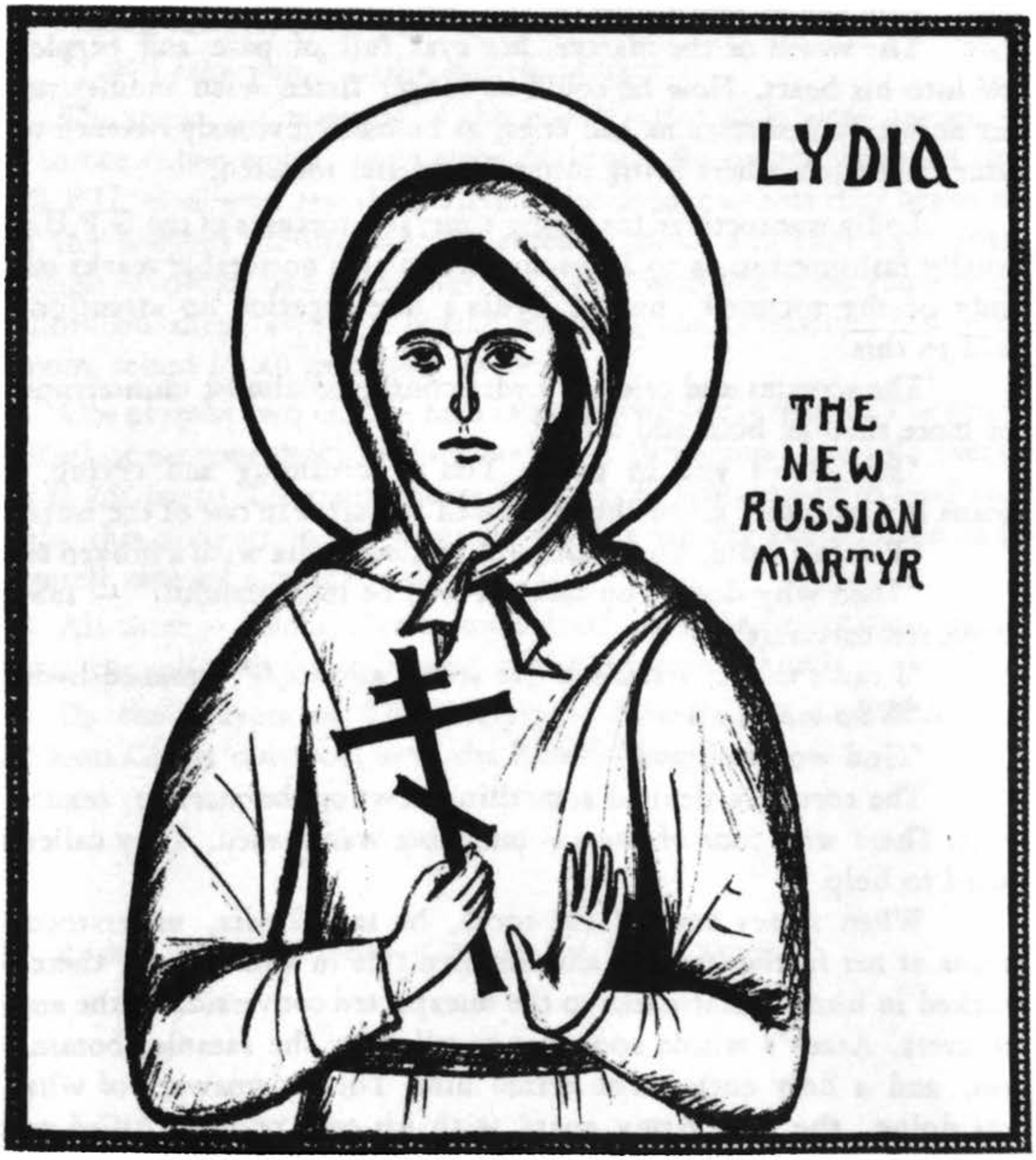
This was amazing and was noticed by everybody, including the party chiefs. They kept watch over Lydia, but discovered nothing suspicious: she did not go at all to the churches that had been legalized by the Bolsheviks, and she attended catacomb services rarely and carefully. The G.P.U. (secret police) knew that members of the catacomb church existed in the diocese, but they could find no way of uncovering and arresting them.

With the aim of uncovering those who had not yet been arrested, the G.P.U. suddenly returned from exile Bishop Andrew (Ukhtomsky), who was deeply revered by the people and by all elements of the catacomb church; but at the bishop's direction he was received openly by only one church in Ufa, although secretly the whole diocese came to him. The G.P.U. was mistaken: instead of being uncovered, the catacomb church deepened and spread, remaining as before inaccessible to spies. The G.P.U., convinced of the failure of its plan, again arrested Bishop Andrew and sent him into exile.[1]

Lydia was arrested on July 9, 1928. The secret-operations department had long been seeking a typist who had been supplying the workers of the Forestry Department with typewritten brochures containing lives of the Saints, prayers, sermons and instructions of ancient and recent Church hierarchs. It had been noticed that on this typist's typewriter the lower stem of the "k" was broken; and thus Lydia was discovered.

The G.P.U. understood that there had fallen into their hands a clue for uncovering the whole catacomb church. Ten days of uninterrupted questioning did not break the martyr; she simply refused to say anything. On July 20 the interrogator, having lost all patience, gave Lydia over to the "special command" for interrogation.

This "special command" worked in a corner room in the cellar of the GPU. A permanent guard was stationed in the cellar corridor; on this day the guard was Cyril Ataev, a 23-year-old private. He saw Lydia



as she was brought into the cellar. The preceding ten-days' questioning had drained the strength of the martyr and she could not go down the steps. Private Ataev, at the call of his chiefs, held her and led her down to the interrogation chamber.

"May Christ save you," Lydia thanked the guard, sensing in the Red Army guard a spark of compassion for her in the delicate gentleness of his strong arms.

And Christ saved Ataev.

The words of the martyr, her eyes full of pain and perplexity, fell into his heart. Now he could no longer listen with indifference to her uninterrupted screams and cries, as he had previously listened to the same cries from others being interrogated and tortured.

Lydia was tortured for a long time. The tortures of the G.P.U. were usually fashioned so as to leave no particularly noticeable marks on the body of the tortured, but at Lydia's interrogation no attention was paid to this.

The screams and cries of Lydia continued almost uninterruptedly for more than an hour and a half.

"But aren't you in pain? You're screaming and crying, that means it's painful?" asked the exhausted torturers in one of the intervals.

"Painful! Lord, how painful!" replied Lydia with a broken moan.

"Then why don't you talk? It will be more painful!" -- said the perplexed torturers.

"I can't talk... I can't... He won't allow... " groaned Lydia.

"Who won't allow?"

"God won't allow!"

The torturers devised something new for the martyr: sexual assault. There were four of them -- one more was needed. They called the guard to help.

When Ataev entered the room, he saw Lydia, understood the means of her further torture and his own role in this -- and there was worked in him a miracle like to the unexpected conversion of the ancient torturers. Ataev's whole soul was repelled by the satanic abominableness, and a holy enthusiasm seized him. Totally unaware of what he was doing, the Red Army guard with his own revolver killed on the spot the two torturers who stood before him. Before even the second shot had echoed the G.P.U. man who had been standing behind hit Cyril on the head with the handle of his gun. Ataev still had strength enough to turn and seize his attacker by the throat, but a shot from the fourth one knocked him to the floor.

Cyril fell with his head toward Lydia, who was stretched out with thongs. The Lord gave him the opportunity of hearing once more from the martyr words of hope. And looking straight into Lydia's eyes,

NEW MARTYR LYDIA

Cyril, blood gushing from him, gasped his union to the Lord:

"Saint, take me with you!"

"I will take you," Lydia smiled, radiant.

The sound and meaning of this conversation as it were opened a door to the other world, and terror darkened the consciousness of the two G.P.U. men who remained alive. With insane shouts they began to shoot the helpless victims who threatened them, and they shot until both their revolvers had been emptied. Those who had come running at the shots led them away, shouting insanely, and themselves fled from the room, seized by an unknown terror.

One of these two G.P.U. men became completely insane. The other soon died of nervous shock. Before his death this second one told everything to his friend, Sergeant Alexei Ikonnikoff, who turned to God and brought this account to the Church; for his zealous propagation of it he himself suffered a martyr's death.

All three -- Lydia, Cyril, and Alexei, -- have been canonized as saints in the religious consciousness of the catacomb church.

By the prayers of Thy martyrs -- Lydia, Cyril, and Alexei, -- Lord Jesus Christ our God, save the Russian people!

Sources: Polsky's *The New Martyrs of Russia*, Vol. II, pp. 249-53.

21

The Young Father Vladimir

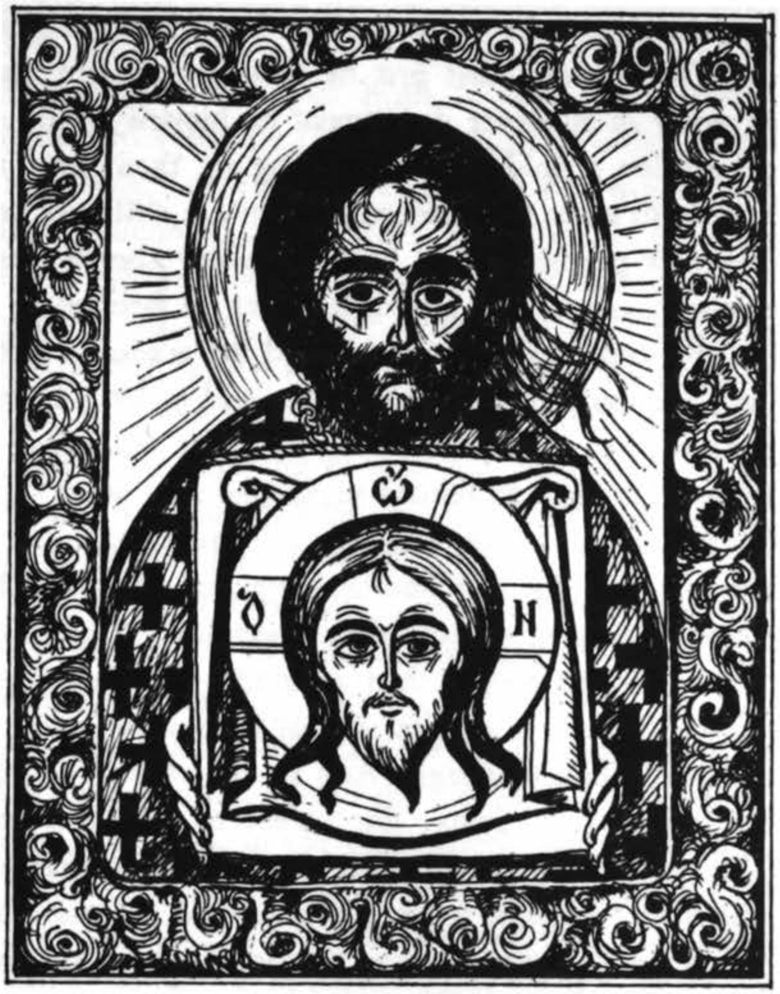
A NEW MIRACLE WORKER OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH

Commemorated August 16 (†1930)

Work in me a sign unto good,
and let them that hate me behold
and be put to shame...
Psalm 85:16

FROM MY CHILDHOOD I had a friend who was two years older than I. She was married two years before me. In the first year of their marriage a son was born to them, and he was baptized with the name of Vladimir. From his very birth the child struck everyone by his large and beautiful dark brown eyes which had, as it were, a sorrowful expression. The child was extraordinarily quiet. In the second year of their marriage a second boy was born to them who was called Boris. This child was the complete opposite of his older brother. From the first day of his appearance in the world he struck everyone by his extraordinarily noisy and lively character. I loved both of these boys and often would come to baby-sit and spend time with them. Vladimir grew up and remained exactly the same as he was born. He never wanted to play with other children. He would sit down and remain alone quietly in a corner. This disturbed his parents. "What is this little head thinking about all the time?" the parents asked me. The father and mother were very religious and raised their children in this spirit. Little Volodya was eager to go to church and often went with his nurse when his parents for some reason could not go to the Divine service. The second boy, Boris, on the contrary, was lazy about going to church.

FATHER VLADIMIR



FATHER VLADIMIR WITH THE ICON OF
THE SAVIOUR NOT-MADE-BY-HANDS

When it came time for Vladimir to go to school, his mother said to me: "I do not know how Vovochka will be able to study. It seems that he is not only incapable, but there's also some kind of abnormality about him. He is not interested in anything except church; he is always quiet and deep in thought about something not in accordance to his age." The parents were mistaken; they did not understand their own child. He went through all the classes to the finish as first in his class, astonishing his teachers by his mind and talents.

And when after finishing high school he declared that he desired to enter the theological academy for further education, his parents here also did not understand the path which he had chosen and which was clearly indicated to him by God Himself. They insisted that first he should complete the four-year course of the university in whatever department he himself would choose; and if after this his intention should remain unchanging, then they would give their blessing for him to enter the academy. "You are still very young," they said to him; "obey your parents." And he submissively obeyed them.

The four-year course of the law department he finished in three years, as was allowed at that time, and then he entered the academy. After finishing the academy he was very quickly ordained deacon, and in 1916 he was ordained priest. He did not wish to become married, but since according to Church rules he did not have the right to remain unmarried as a priest — then behold what a great sign of God saved him and was fulfilled in him.

His family was friendly with another very pious family. They had one young daughter who was dying of advanced tuberculosis. The physicians indicated that she would live no longer than a month. She knew of Vladimir's unvanquishable desire to become a priest and of his sorrow in connection with the necessity of entering into marriage. And so she offered herself as a holy sacrifice, knowing that she was dying. She agreed to enter into marriage with Vladimir, even though she could hardly stand on her feet, so that he, being left a widower, would have the right to be a priest. The parents did not hinder this holy deed which she undertook before her death. After the wedding they led her home from church; she no longer got up from bed, and in two weeks she peacefully died.

Father Vladimir, marked from his birth by God, went on his chosen path. In 1924 he and his parents were sent from Moscow to the city of Tver in so-called "voluntary exile." Despite his youth, Father Vladimir was given great veneration and love by the parishioners of the church where he celebrated Divine services. Neither he nor his parents had the right to leave the city, and they were considered as being under the observation of the GPU.

The sermons of Father Vladimir were distingnished by their complete fearlessness. He called on everyone to submit to no kind of church interference by the Bolsheviks. He would not listen to any kind of warnings to be careful.

After one extraordinary sermon he went to bid farewell to his parents, having been secretly warned by someone that he would be arrested at night. Insistently, before his final farewell on earth, he begged his father and mother under no conditions, even at the moment of death, to call a priest who had entered into contact with the Soviet regime [i.e., had remained under Metropolitan Sergius after his "Declaration" of 1927], even though one would have to die without confession and communion of the Holy Mysteries. In the same night he was led away and executed in the Lyubanka prison in Moscow.

After this until 1932, not living in Moscow, I did not know anything about this family with which we had been such friends. In 1935 I went to visit my mother, who was quite old and lived in Moscow. Walking along the street alone, I saw Boris coming to meet me. We immediately recognized each other, even though we had not seen each other for a long time. With burning eyes he began to tell me about himself.

We came to the first boulevard and sat down on a bench. And this is what he told me about the evident miracle of God's great mercy which had been performed upon him:

"When the unsettled times before the Revolution began, I immediately gave in to the propaganda. I joined the Young Communists immediately after it was organized, and soon, to the great sorrow and terror of my parents, I became also a member of the Atheist League. My brother Vladimir tried to return me to God, entreating me to come to my senses, and probably both during his life and after his murder he prayed much for the salvation of my soul. But this did not cause me to waver. On the contrary, after he was shot I soon became the head of the Atheist League in one remote city where I went voluntarily, after marrying a girl who was also in the Young Communists and who ridiculed faith in God. Her parents, just like mine, were very religious. Both hers and mine declared to us that if we did not go through the Church rite of matrimony they would renounce us. Despite the extreme difference in our views, I very much loved my father and mother. Seeing their inexpressible sorrow, I persuaded my bride to fulfill the demand of our parents and, while in our souls we mocked the sacrament of marriage, nonetheless we were secretly married — secretly, because otherwise we both would have been shot. Before the wedding the mother of my wife blessed her with a large icon of the Saviour Not-made-with-hands and said: 'Give me your word that you will not throw it out; even if you do not need it now, still do not destroy it.' Truly, we did not need this icon, and it lay in a trunk in our shed together with useless things.

"A year later a son was born to us. We both wished to have a child and were very happy at his birth, but the child was born sick and weak, with a tubercular spine. We had managed to preserve something from the previous pre-revolutionary wealth, and my own salary was sufficient so that without sparing money we could ask the best physicians to come. They all said that in the best possible case, if the boy would be always lying down on his back in a plaster cast, he could live to be six years old, but no more. And so we went away to a remote place, trusting in a better climate. There I became the head of the Atheist League and in every way possible persecuted the Church.

"The child was five years old and his health was getting worse all the time. Then we were not living in the city itself but in a healthful place in the country. The rumor came to us that a famous professor of children's diseases had been sent to this city for resettlement. One had to go 20 miles from our village to the nearest station, and the train went only once in a day. The boy was very sick, and I decided to go and bring the professor to us. When I came to the station, the train left before my very eyes. What should I do? Should I wait a whole day while my wife was at home and the child might die suddenly without me? I thought and thought — but what could be done? I turned back. I came home and found the following: The mother, weeping, was on her knees, embracing the child's legs, which were already growing cold. The local medic had just gone out and said that the child's last minutes had come. I sat down at the table by the window, opposite the shed, took my head in my hands, and gave myself over to despair. Suddenly I saw quite clearly that the doors of the shed were opening, and out of the shed my deceased brother Vladimir came, in priest's vestments. In his arms, facing towards me, was the icon of the Saviour Not-made-with-hands. I was stunned! I clearly saw how he walked, how his long dark hair was blowing in the wind; I heard his steps approaching. I grew cold and was petrified. He entered the room, came up to me, and in silence gave the icon into my hands and then vanished.

"I cannot communicate in words," Boris said to me with tears streaming down his cheeks, "what I experienced. I experienced God! I rushed to the shed, searched out the icon in the trunk and laid it on the child. In the morning of the following day our boy was completely well. The physicians who were treating him finally shrugged their shoulders. They took off the cast. There was no trace of tuberculosis! Here I understood everything! I understood that there is a God Who is merciful to sinners, and that by the prayers of Father Vladimir he had performed the marvellous wonder of the healing of the child and also the healing of my wife and myself, the salvation of our souls. Without hesitating, I resigned not only as the head of the Atheist League, but also from the Communist Party, of which I was already a member. My wife did likewise. I spoke openly and did not hide the miracle that had occurred to us. From that hour I told everyone everywhere about the miracle that had happened, and I called them to faith in God. By His holy will I was not arrested right away and, without putting it off another day, we came to my parents near Moscow, where they had settled after the end of the exile. We baptized the child, giving him the name of George."

I parted with Boris, of course, under the inexpressible impression of the miracle which had been performed upon him by the prayers of the righteous Father Vladimir, and I never saw him again. When in 1937 I came back to Moscow from the far south, I found out from his parents that a month after the baptism of the child they had gone to the Caucasus. Boris continued to tell everyone of his former spiritual error. And behold, while he was in perfect health, and was of course being secretly watched and followed, suddenly, in a single instant, he died, but not from a heart attack. It was not allowed for physicians to determine the cause of death. He had, of course, been killed by the Bolsheviks.

Source: **memoires of Natalia Urusova, *Orthodox Russia*, 1957, no. 5, pp. 8-10.**

22

Fathers Ismael and Michael

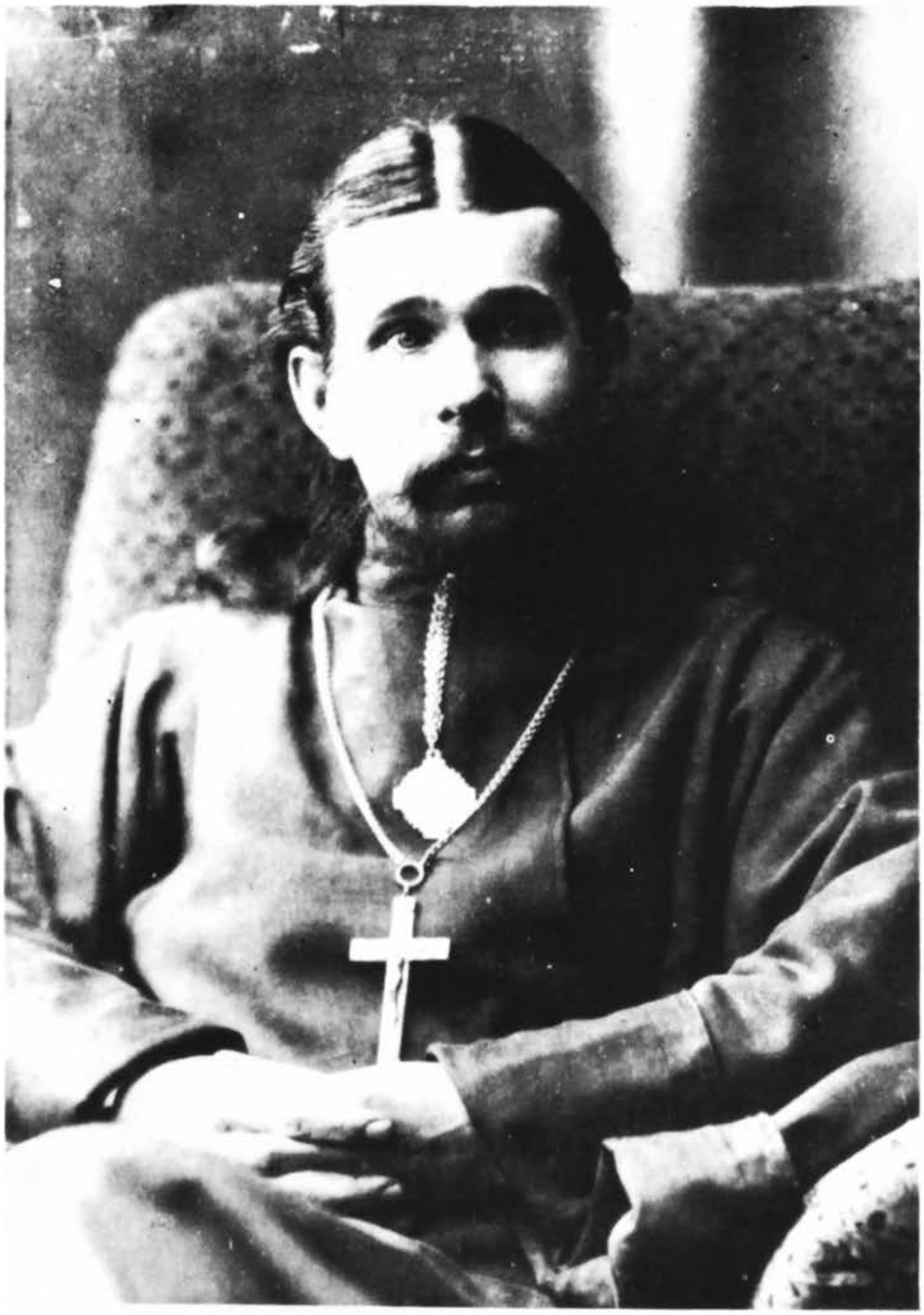
THE CATACOMB BROTHER-PRIESTS

Commemorated June 17 (†1937)

> ***...And you shall be hated by all men***
> ***for My name's sake. But he that***
> ***shall endure unto the end, he shall be saved***
> (Mark 13:13).

ISMAEL AND HIS younger brother Michael Rozhdestvensky were the sons of a Novgorod priest and spent their young years in that city. Later Ismael graduated from the Petersburg Theological Academy, married, and became priest of the Transfiguration Church near Petrograd, leading a very serious and conscientious priest's life. After the 1927 "Declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius, he became an adamant "Josephite," strongly opposing the "legalization" of the Church and going with firm step in the path of the Holy Apostles and Confessors, which of course led to his persecution. The good pastor lays down his life for the sheep. We once heard him say: "I am going to Golgotha; who will follow me!?" And he went far, to the far north, to the region of everlasting ice, from where it was hardly possible for anyone who was sent there at that time to return. But in the souls of those who revere and love him he is alive and, of course, in difficult moments one seeks help from him...

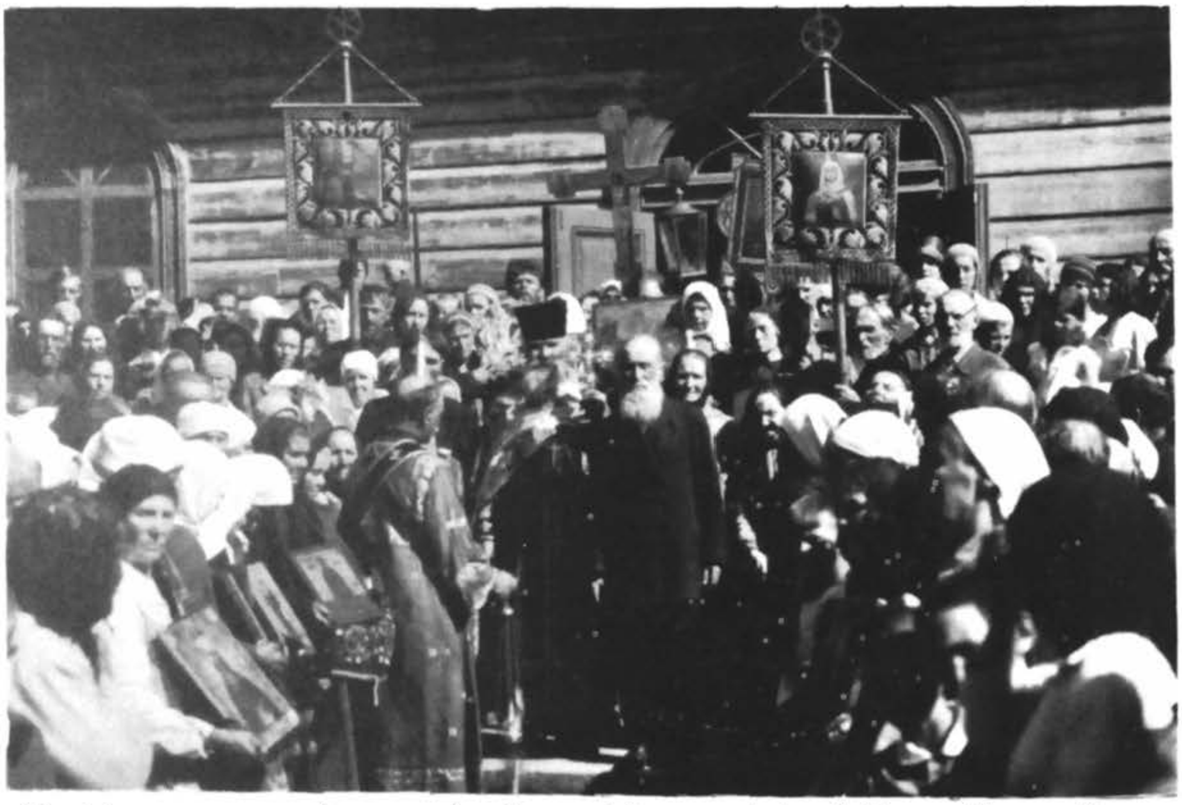
With his honest and pure glance, Father Ismael attracted a large number of the faithful. We lived not far from the place where his church was, and rumors of this highly revered, outstanding pastor were widespread around us. We first visited his church in 1926 and after this made a definite resolve to visit his church every Sunday and feast day. Listening attentively to his sermons and seeing his penetrating, careful, conscientious way of celebrating services, we found it more and more pleasant to be there.



Father Ismael Rozhdestvensky

Fr. Michael
after his first exile

Fr. Michael with his daughter



Outdoor procession at the Josephite parish of Transfiguration,
1920's, after the first arrest of Fr. Ismael

FATHERS ISMAEL AND MICHAEL

Many people came to the Liturgy and the All-night Vigil. At times not everyone could get into the church, and they would stand in the garden and wait without fail until Batiushka would come out and bless them. Likewise, there were quite a few demon-possessed women from near and far. They loved Father Ismael very much, even though his presence sometimes evoked whole dramas in them. They screamed, threatened, spit, and often fell on the floor foaming at the mouth. But Father Ismael had only to read the prayers, pressing the Holy Cross to their lips, in order to stop all this, and in a minute they became normal, getting up by themselves and looking around. I had to witness this more than once. The suffering women sometimes trembled even at the sight of his devoted, obedient spiritual children.

We will never forget the remarkable phenomenon which we observed during a moleben which Father Ismael was serving before the icon of the Mother of God "Assuage My Sorrow." While Father Ismael was reading the Gospel, before our eyes there appeared a small rose-colored cloud surrounding his head like a halo. This was not long before his arrest and martyr's death in 1937.

No less striking, not only to us but also to many others in church, was a case of the clairvoyance of this remarkable priest. A man who lived 15 miles away never came to our church, even though he had heard of this exceptional priest who drew people to himself. One Sunday he decided to verify the rumors, and he came. At the end of the Liturgy, standing in the crowd of faithful, he heard Father Ismael say: "Well, thank you, slave of God Peter, that you are praying for me," and he looked in his direction. He was indeed Peter, and this struck him so forcibly that from that day he became a constant visitor to the church and a man close to Father Ismael.

Yet our poor Father Ismael also knew grief, even from his close ones. After he had begun to celebrate secret services in the Catacomb Church, once at 11 p.m. he knocked at our door, asking lodging for the night. At that time he no longer had his own quarters near the church, since everything had been taken away. He went from house to house and stayed wherever people were not afraid to receive him. This time, after walking the dark, unlighted road from his spiritual daughter to our place, he told us by the way that she had unexpectedly sent him away. After spending the night with us he set out on his way; but he did not in the least change his attitude toward his spiritual daughter, knowing that she was forced to do this because the secret police was looking for him to arrest him, and she had a family of her own to protect.

Once a woman who was not well known to Father Ismael came to confession. When she returned home, perhaps desiring to please her daughter who was married to an atheist, she declared that the priest had hit her while blessing her. Father Ismael had the custom of as it were implanting the Sign of the Cross in the forehead and shoulders. A trial followed, and he was condemned to forced labor. When he returned home after three years, he was again arrested and banished for ten years, which proved fatal; he was never heard of again. He was only 45 years old and left behind a wife and a three-year-old son. When they saw him off for the last time, people wanted to run after the train, but the rifle-butts of the Red Army soldiers drove them back. We will always remember his dear, shining gray eyes, as pure as a child's and a little naive; his smile and his blessing from the window...

Professor I. M. Andreev, who attended Father Ismael's catacomb services in the Petrograd region, informed us that Father Ismael was executed by shooting in 1937 during the "Ezhov" purge,

Even more tragic was the fate of Father Ismael's brother Michael, six years younger, who was ordained priest in 1927 under his brother's influence and at first served together with him in his church. When Father Ismael was arrested, he gave over the care of his flock entirely to Father Michael.

Father Michael's deep understanding of Christianity and his faith in the future life, for which temporal earthly life is only a preparation, sometimes simply stunned people. And so the ever-increasing flock was drawn to Father Michael just as they had been to his arrested brother. He celebrated the Divine services, which at first were still in the church, reverently, penetratingly, and attentively. His sermons, which he considered indispensable, were penetrated with the desire to teach people to love God entirely, with a true, self-sacrificing love, preparing a soul for unavoidable trials, and perhaps for death for Him.

The unforgettable meals after Liturgy were a great joy, despite the poor food and, in addition, the strictly observed fasts! At table there sat poor and miserable people. To everyone Father Michael had the same attitude; everyone he encouraged. After one such pauper had been buried without charge, the widow was treated with special kindness and was asked to eat at the common table for the whole forty days afterwards. This was an apostolic family; everyone was kin and close, each suffering for the others. Having almost no income, since their flock was very poor, both brothers lived with a single thought: to help, rather than to receive.

FATHERS ISMAEL AND MICHAEL

In those frightful times, when people were jailed and banished without trial or investigation, solely for faith in God, Father Michael went immediately wherever he was summoned, risking his life, supported only by his faith in God's Omnipresence. He went even to complete atheists in the hours before their death, if by inspiration from above he hoped to awaken their frozen souls. And a dying atheist would glance at the face which bent over him in love, would soften, and...repent.

In 1934 Father Michael also was arrested with his wife and sent in banishment to various places; his two children were taken by their grandparents. After three years he was released, and then he could serve only secretly, having no right even to a place to stay. His wife could not endure such a life of suffering, and on being released from prison she did not return to him but found another man for herself. Still, Father Michael waited to see her when she would come to visit the children. He had no home where he could see his wife or children, and of course he could not meet them at the catacomb services; and so he would meet his wife at various places in the country, and would see the children often at our place. Once she wished to take the children for a visit to her home in Alma Ata. Father Michael asked us to come with him to see them off at the train station. The tickets had already been bought and we sat there waiting for the train, when suddenly the little girl declared that she did not want to go but would remain with her father. The boy, however, went, and when he returned he was already quite different.

After the Sergian ''Declaration'' Father Michael, of course became a ''Josephite'' like his brother, and he allowed us no contact whatever with the Sergianist church. Once he became extremely angry with me for merely turning to look into a Sergianist church as I passed by on the street.

After the Second World War broke out, life became ever more frightful. Here our father increased his prayer and began to prepare everyone to accept a yet more difficult cross. All of us were already prepared for death. Somewhere in a little village, in a hut located far from the main road, the services would begin at 5 in the morning. When and where the services were to be held was communicated by word of mouth, and people would gather, but tried to come separately, at different times, so as not to attract anyone's attention. Afterwards, also, people would leave separately, one at a time.

There were few people at a time for services. Each person was well known to Father Michael, all ''our own'' people. No new person was accepted into the Catacomb Church until he, his life and outlook had been investigated. If you told an outsider, you might unwillingly become a betrayer.

In place of an altar table there was a simple table; on it were a Gospel, a Cross, and the Holy Chalice. On the walls were icons. Those who were going to sing would gather by the entrance. There were many icon-lamps, and they illuminated the room. Beeswax candles were obtained, apparently from whoever made them. Everything was quiet, orderly, reverent. In the reading and singing not a single letter was allowed to be added or taken away; the services were absolutely complete.

By the beginning of Proskomedia everyone would have gathered for the Liturgy. One can never forget it! Such prayer one cannot experience again in one's whole life! Father Michael with his arms outstretched, and tears streaming down his cheeks... Everyone would weep together, both for themselves and for him, who had, besides everything else, such great trials in his own family. He served slowly, penetratingly... When the dogs would bark outside our hearts froze; but it was for this that we were called, trying to strengthen ourselves.

One's spiritual state at such catacomb services is difficult to express in human language. It is not at all like any service in our free Russian Church Abroad, even though it is the same Orthodoxy. First of all, there is total fearlessness, peace of soul, a heavenly, unearthly joy, the desire not to leave, not to cease praying. One wished only to be with the faithful; let them take us away, let them deprive us of life!

The Paschal service was entirely of heaven. Father Michael was in white linen vestments. His face was unforgettable; it entirely glowed from within, with a heavenly, angelic smile.

Father Michael remained always calm. In moments that could be dangerous, when he, not having a roof of his own and for the sake of his flock not wishing to be arrested, would spend the night with us, suddenly all our fear vanished and we were ready to go with him wherever he might be sent. He was both friend, and brother, and father, and mother. If he had to celebrate a service at our place, he would come in lay clothes with a suitcase in his hand which contained his vestments, and, under cover of the noise made by the kerosene stoves in the common kitchen, he would peacefully and quietly celebrate the service. And God preserved him!

The words which Father Michael spoke to us that last time we saw him were remarkable. The Second World War was raging. The approaching enemy was already bombarding Petrograd, when at night Father Michael secretly visited us on his way to give Holy Commuinion to his spiritual daughter in the city. All our pleas not to go becaue of the danger, or to come with us into occupied territory, were in vain, and nothing could stop him. He sat by our table, called us close to him, and said, ''Listen carefully, Now we are all about to part. Many of us will not remain alive, will be killed. But remember: no matter where you may be, at the hour of your death, I will come to you, will confess you and give you Holy Communion and will myself lead you to the Heavenly Kingdom to the Altar of God, bearing witness for you; for my brother, Father Ismael, entrusted you to me to take care of you as spiritual children, and I must give answer for you.''

These were his last words to us. He got up, blessed us, and went away into the night that was charged with guns, fire, and death.

. . . ***And you shall be hated by all men for My name's sake. . . But he that shall endure unto the end, he shall be saved.*** **(Mark 13:13)**

Source: **Alexis and Zinaida Makushinsky.**

23

Abbess Sophia of Kiev

CATACOMB ABBESS OF THE PROTECTION CONVENT

Commemorated March 22 (†1941)

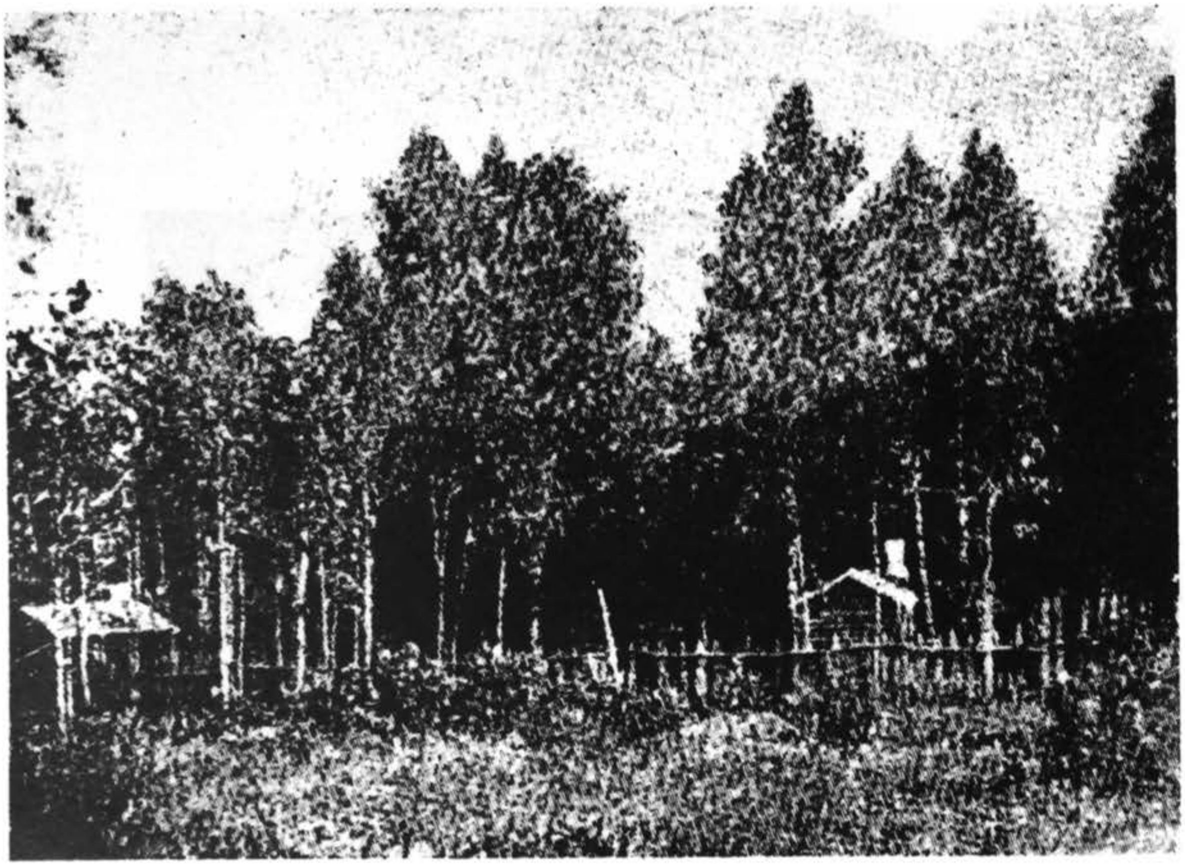
The righteous doth sing and rejoice
Prov. 29:6

OF INESTIMABLE SPIRITUAL VALUE is the fearless stand for Christ's Truth by the New Martyrs of Russia. Especially by their manful act of testifying where the Truth was to be found at a time when many did not see this — the Josephite confessors of 1927 and thereafter historically preserved the savor of Orthodoxy for generations to follow. Now that almost half a century has passed, history has shown that these "stubborn rebels," the followers of Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd, were absolutely correct, and their significance now shines forth as equal to that of the great Confessors of Orthodoxy in ancient times.

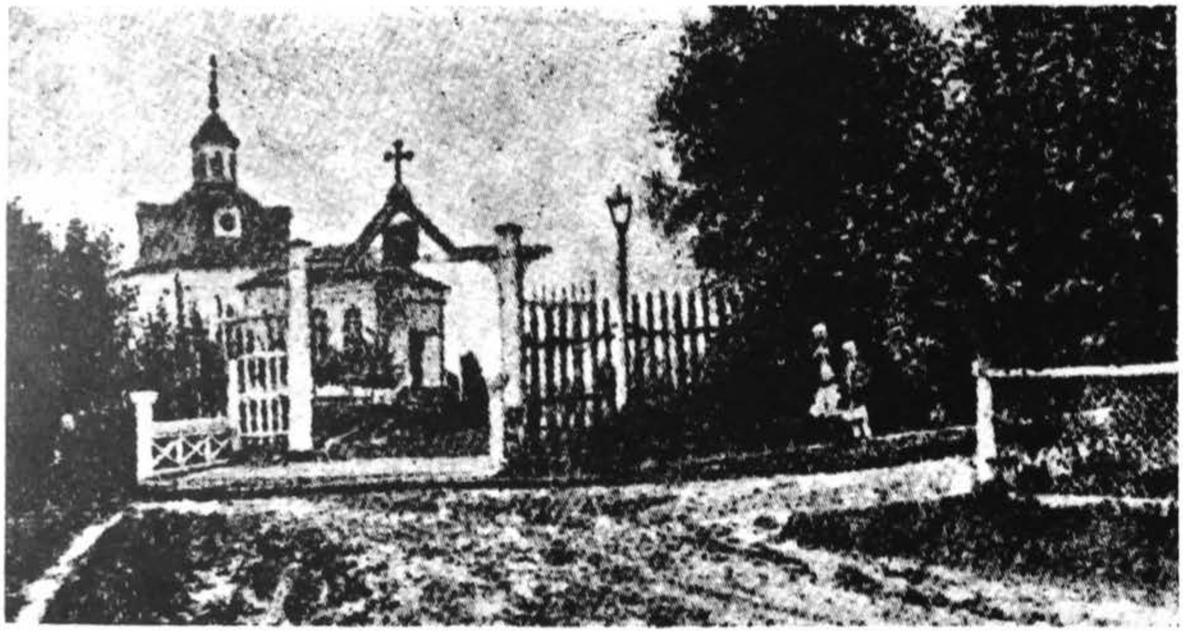
One of such Josephites was Abbess Sophia, whose boldness as a confessor was a direct result of her high spirituality and genuine Orthodox world-view. She reached spiritual maturity at the time of Russia's pinnacle of holiness, when the Russian land was preparing to offer itself as a pure and ripe sacrifice to God at the bloody hands of the God-hating Communists.

The future Abbess, Sophia Grineva, was born in 1873 in a wealthy landowner's family. The Tula and Kaluga region, sanctified by Optina Monastery and its remarkable influence on all phases of religious life, was the countryside where the young Sophia received her upbringing and spiritual formation. When her father died, the children stayed for a while in the convent of her native town of Belev, which was under the direct spiritual direction of the Optina Elders, and whose abbess was their family's former governess. They often visited Optina Monastery, where once Elder Anatole prophetically called the 12-year-old Sonia an "abbess." But it was discovered that she had a very

Abbess Sophia of the St. John the Almsgiver Convent



The original huts of the desert-dwellers of Holy Trinity Convent, where the young Sophia laid her monastic beginning.



The entrance gate of the Convent of the Icon of the Mother of God, "Comfort and Consolation." At left, inside: the main church of St. John the Almsgiver. At right: some children from the Convent's orphanage.

good voice, and so she was sent to the musical conservatory to study for a career in opera. This, however, did not satisfy the heart of God's chosen one, which was striving for higher things, and her soul longed for monastic struggle.

Not far from the Grinev estate lived a wealthy landowner, Znamensky, whose daughter Anna, having just completed her higher education, abandoned all thought of an upper-class career and, out of religious zeal, preferred to become a village school teacher. Being aflame with monastic striving, she would give spiritual lectures with the singing of akathists, ending late at night. These were attended by more than 400 people. Anna and Sophia became close friends. Late one winter evening, going through the deserted woods to Anna's lecture, Sophia encountered a wolf, and her death seemed certain, since these beasts, who plagued this territory, were not only cattle-killers, but had recently even killed an armed officer. Here she made a vow to become a nun if she remained alive. She made the sign of the Cross over the wolf, and at once he ran away into the woods. Soon Sophia caught a severe cold and lost her voice, thus ending her worldly pursuits. By that time Anna had asked and received her share of land from her father's inheritance, and together with ten other young women she settled in a remote and deserted wooded area and began to lead a severe monastic life, with the blessing of several holy men: St. John of Kronstadt, Elder Ambrose of Optina, Elder Barnabas of the Gethsemene Skete, and others. The girls built huts for their dwelling out of branches and boards, slept on the earthern floor with a rock for a pillow, ate dry bread, and only on feast days had some warm weak barley soup. Soon the news spread of this genuine skete-life, and Sophia joined Anna. Anna with her spiritual daughters felled trees, chopped firewood, dug a well, and built a beautiful church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, where they conducted the whole daily cycle of Divine services. Life was hard but very rewarding. The community flourished, with over 600 sisters, an orphanage, an old-age home, a large vegetable garden and orchard, a brick factory, and metochia in Moscow and Petersburg. But Anna, overwhelmed by her success, suffered a grave spiritual catastrophe: she was lured into spiritism and left the convent. Dissension struck the convent, and some sisters left. Sophia went to a holy Elder, Gerasimus of Kaluga, who had just opened the St. Nicholas Convent for his spiritual daughters.

Father Gerasimus, himself a spiritual son of Elder Ambrose of Optina, had a spiritual son, Misha, who later received the name of his Elder, Gerasimus. He later became as clairvoyant as his Elder, and founded a St. Sergius Skete, where he gave spiritual healing to many suffering ones. Between him and Sophia there developed a spiritual friendship which lasted for life; later they would send spiritually crippled people to each other for healing. Following his example, Sophia left the convent with another sister and went to found an independent community. On the bank of the beautiful Oka River there was an abandoned church of St. John the Almsgiver.There the young sisters settled in order to continue their "narrow path" of poverty, daily church services, and labor. Their life inspired followers, and a new community, dedicated to the Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos "Comfort and Consolation," grew rapidly and soon became a spring of spiritual enlightenment also for the workers of a local factory, who were mostly ex-convicts.

When the church authorities noticed the gifts of Abbess Sophia, they made her head of one of the largest convents in Russia, that of the Protection of the Mother of God in Kiev, a post which she accepted in hope of being able to help financially her own convent, which was in need of funds. The city convent in Kiev was so large that it possessed a large city hospital, in addition to other charitable institutions. But Mother Sophia was as guileness and simple as before. This is where the Revolution found her.

Being a true offspring of the Optina Elders, with whom she was in constant contact, she soberly discerned the true nature of the Soviet Revolution and knew what to expect from it. Thus, when the assault of the "Living Church" struck, her convent was one of the first to give a blow back, although she herself had already been arrested. A new calendarist bishop was forced into the convent by GPU agents to serve Liturgy. When the women who attended it came up to kiss the Cross at the end, one after another they spit on the bishop's hand that held the Cross, and thus an end was put to "renovation" in the Protection Convent, and the bishop learned his lesson and repented. Hearing about this, Bishop Damascene (see below) exclaimed with bitterness: "If it were not for women, who else would defend the Church? Let them at least defend it however they can!"

Abbess Sophia was arrested and released several times in the period before Metropolitan Sergius' "Declaration" of betrayal to the Church in 1927. Mother Sophia and her clergy, led by the young Father Dimitry Ivanov, were the first ones in Kiev who openly rejected it. Unfortunately, they were supported by few of the other clergy, while most of the local bishops were silent, in effect accepting the "Declaration." The Convent was confused and divided because of this, and Abbess Sophia thought it wiser to leave the Convent with Father Dimitry and twenty sisters of like mind. A wealthy lady, Mrs. Barbenko, offered her summer home in the Kiev suburb of Irpen as a refuge for the confessors; at this time a miraculous spring had been discovered nearby. Living there, of course, was not easy, since an intensified persecution was being directed against all Josephites. In the house where the nuns lived there was a hall adorned with paintings. At night they were taken down and replaced by icons, and all night long fervent prayer was offered in special vigils. In the morning the paintings were replaced, and no outsiders could know that this was a catacomb church, which served as a spiritual center for the true Orthodox Christians of the whole Kiev area.

There exists an anti-Sergianist document from this circle, a letter written from a person close to Abbess Sophia to a friend abroad in 1933. To get around the Soviet censor, the church situation is thinly disguised behind a discussion of "doctors." The person who received it immediately understood, of course, that "Dr. Sergiev" is Metropolitan Sergius, the "old men Petrov and Kirillov" are the elder hierarchs, Metropolitans Peter and Cyril, who refused to accept the "Declaration"; the "clinics and drugstores" are churches; and "treatment" is Holy Communion and the other Holy Mysteries. Here is the document:

"None of our people have any contact with the doctors of Sergiev, and we do not go to his clinics for treatment. He has acted completely illegally, since the old man, Dr. Petrov, only assigned him as his replacement for current business when he had to go away, but Sergiev, without a consultation of all the doctors, took over the administration, which he directs in all matters. The old men Petrov and Kirillov do not recognize this administration, and both of them are in persecutions and sorrows. My husband was very upset with the activities of Dr. Sergiev, because all the zealots of true homeopathy [Orthodoxy] are deprived of the possibility of treatment, since all the drug stores are in the hands of those who have taken over everything. It is difficult to explain to you, but if you know everything, it is *unacceptable*. I will tell you one thing: I was in Chernigov the whole time without a doctor and travelled to Kiev [to Mother Sophia] when it was necessary, that is, once or twice a year. Here also the children have not gone for treatment."

The leading anti-Sergianist hierarch in the Kiev area was the bright figure of the Bishop-Confessor Damascene (Cedrick), who was spiritually very close to Abbess Sophia. He wrote flaming appeals showing the ruinousness of Metropolitan Sergius' policy in every aspect. His stirring appeals were secretly copied and re-copied by Orthodox zealots, and some of them reached the free world, where they were distributed and recently printed by his secretary.* His deep concern was for the future of true, unadulterated Orthodoxy in Russia, a concern shared by his friend, Metropolitan Cyril, and, of course, by Abbess Sophia. The only answer to the church situation, he thought, was to prepare for the end of the world and cease thinking about a church "organization." He was often arrested, released for a short time, and then exiled again and again. On one such visit, when Mother Sophia was also free from prison for a time, he tonsured her in the Great Schema. There exists a rare photograph of him with Mother Sophia and her flock, taken probably in 1934, between his last two arrests; he is seated at center with Mother Sophia seated at his left.

Abbess Sophia's priest, Father Dimitry Ivanov, was a true confessor. He suffered severely for his heroic stand for Orthodoxy and his flaming sermons. He was in prison for a long time, then was released and arrested a second time, being severely beaten. Finally, after being tortured almost to death, he was sent in exile to the far north, to the city of Archangelsk. His wife managed to accompany him, but he was too weak even to stay on his feet. They came to Archangelsk, not knowing a soul in the city. Father Dimitry fell down in the middle of the street and just lay there, unable to move. A Jewish doctor who was passing by took him to his home and cared for him; and in his arms Father Dimitry gave up his soul to God. His wife later told about this. All the members of the Irpen community were likewise arrested one day and exiled to an island in the Kamchatka area in the Far East, where they were placed in a collective farm that raised reindeer. Mrs. Babenko, who became a nun, sent word from there, but then was never heard of again. Thus the Irpen haven of true Orthodoxy came to an end.

Abbess Sophia was arrested before the rest of the community, and thus she was not sent with the other sisters to the Far East, but was thrown from one prison to another, mostly in European Russia. Her sisters here and there managed to keep watch over her, until finally, as a result of the inhuman prison conditions, she contracted asthma and other serious ailments, and she was released to die. But even while in prison she was not harmless for the God-

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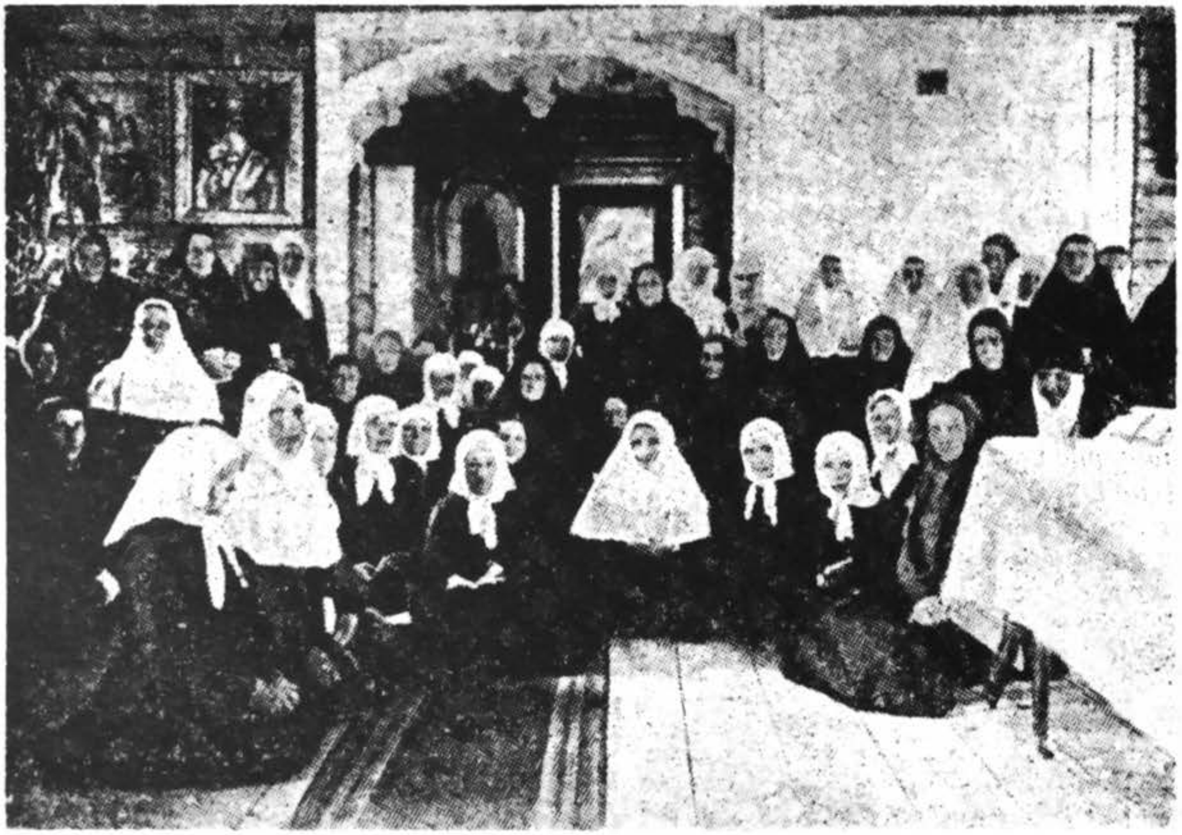
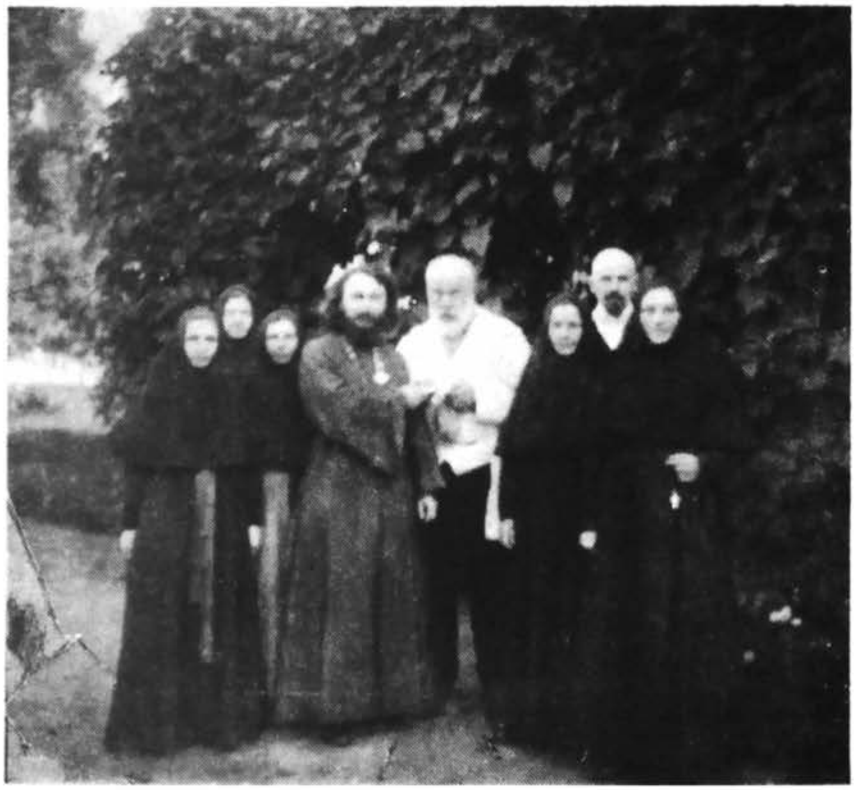
* Elena Lope, *Bishop-Confessors* (in Russian), San Francisco, 1971.

Abbess Sophia in her later years



ABBESS SOPHIA (first from left in white) with sisters during her spiritual talk in the Convent refectory, about 1913

The Protection Convent nuns, 1919. Fr. Dimitry Ivanov hands a letter to S.A. Nilus



hating Soviets. Judging from an earlier encounter she had with one convinced atheist, she must have challenged the beliefs and prejudices of materialists in the prisons, shattering to pieces their philosophical inconsistencies and thus bringing their souls to God. Once, before the Revolution, a lady who knew Abbess Sophia's deeply-rooted understanding of the Orthodox world view, implored her to influence her son, who was a convinced atheist. This man, exceedingly brilliant and talented, was making an enviable career for himself in engineering, and would not yield to anyone's persuasion. Mother Sophia talked to him about religion, but he resisted her words, although she did manage to talk him into going to Sarov Monastery: she herself also went there at this time. The duel between the holy nun and the atheist was not an easy one, but by her holy prayers some miracle took place, which shook the engineer to the depths. He not only became a believer, but was truly reborn spiritually. His former life disgusted rim completely, and he could not endure to continue it. He left his job, abandoned everything he had, put on simple peasants' clothing, and set out on foot for Solovki Monastery. The former atheist became a pilgrim with the Prayer of Jesus on his lips.

The last morning in the much-suffering life of Abbess Sophia arrived when she was amidst her spiritual daughters, on a collective farm near Serpukhov which was a catacomb convent. She was in a state of absolute exhaustion, not having partaken of any food for several days. After morning prayers, when her room had been put in order, Mother Sophia asked to be left alone, and then began to read her favorite book, the Gospel, — when the sisters heard her coughing and gasping for air. The agony lasted for three hours, but she was fully conscious and her eyes were clear. Then she turned her gaze to an icon, closed her eyes for the last time, and departed to the Lord. That was on March 22 (April 4, NS), 1941.

Before my mind's eye one picture will remain forever: Abbess Sophia is sitting on a sofa; on the floor, like a Turk, sits the young Father Dimitry (Ivanov). They are happy, they joke and laugh. She is talking about the guilelessness of children, her orphans... But in spite of such a happy mood, they well know that the "Communist" tomorrow will not spare them, and that they must be ready for everything. But their faith in God does not allow them to fall into despair, and that is why they are so joyful and happy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Amen.

24

Schema-Bishop Macarius

AND THE HOLY NIGHT OF RUSSIAN MONASTICISM

Commemorated April 1 (†1944)

> *Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you...if they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you also.*
>
> John 15:19-20

ALL THAT IS known to us of Schema-Bishop Macarius is contained in the few testimonies that follow; but this little is already enough to present a picture of a holy man, a new martyr of the 20th century catacombs which are described here. These testimonies are by Orthodox Russians who themselves experienced the Communist Yoke and escaped to the West after the Second World War and wrote of their experience. These are first-hand accounts; the details of Bishop Macarius' catacomb life given in the second account were heard from the Bishop's own lips.

I. ST. MACARIUS' MONASTERY

IN THE VICINITY of Petrograd in the early 1930's a small monastery still remained, where many came on pilgrimage — the Hermitage of St. Macarius the Roman.

Early one morning we boarded a train and travelled to the Liuban station. There were thirty of us making a pilgrimage. Having stopped to drink some tea at the monastery metochion in town, we started out on foot for the monastery.

At first the way lay through fields. Around us ears of rye swayed in unison, then we passed rustling fields of oat, then pink fields of buckwheat upon which the passing wind made violet-colored waves. Being city dwellers, we rejoiced in the open spaces, the sun, nature.

SCHEMA-BISHOP MACARIUS

Having rested in a village, we entered the forest. Father P., who led us, began to recite by heart the Akathist to the Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow. Everybody caught up the refrain and later the canticles of the canon. The prayer lasted for a long time; finally the last note died away, but the forest still continued to stretch out just as dense and endless as ever. Everyone was tired and grew silent. Our feet began to ache and swell. Our shoes rubbed our heels until they hurt. Our bodies ached.

We walked and walked — there was no end to the dense green forest. Already dusk was descending, and we still did not know how far we had to go. From one side of the forest the moon appeared; its rays mingled with the twilight, while we continued to walk. Finally we came on a clearing in the forest. Down the hill there ran a small stream, and farther on there appeared a log church. Against the sky a bell-tower was silhouetted, under which was the dark roof of the monastery buildings. And then from a distance there came to us the thin sound of the monastery bell. We hadn't heard a monastery bell for so long, and everyone came to life and almost at a run descended the slope, hoping to arrive in time for the Vigil service.

Here long ago, on a tiny island of firm soil, surrounded on all sides by impenetrable bogs, St. Macarius the Roman had settled and lived a hermit's life. The closed tomb with his holy relics was located in the monastery church. On the site of his cell a small chapel had been built. The monks had drained a large space in the marsh for the church and monastery buildings, had laid out pathways, drained and cultivated parcels of land for fields and vegetable gardens. The Bolsheviks had taken over the fields, depriving the monks of their sustenance. Believers would bring from town sacks of dried bread, and the monks would process them and bake bread for the common table of monks and pilgrims.

Many paupers and fools for Christ had found refuge in the monastery. One of these was Misha, who was well known to everyone from the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Petrograd. His loud voice was familiar to us, and we respected this white-haired old man with youthful black eyes. I remember when once the doctor had done a bad job of extracting one of my teeth, and my jaw was swollen for several months and hurt a great deal. I had to wear a bandage. Misha came to me once during the Liturgy and whispered into my ear: "Go to Novodevichy Convent, take oil from the vigil lamp before the icon of the Martyr Antipas and anoint your cheek with it. Look at you — you think you're smart, going to get healed by a doctor." I turned around, but he was already gone. So I went to the Liturgy at Novodevichy Convent, but the nuns who were selling candles did not even know where they had an icon of the Martyr Antipas. We barely managed to find a small icon. I did as Misha had told me: anointed the cheek with oil and took some oil from the vigil lamp with me. And soon everything passed away: the inflammation disappeared and the jaw stopped hurting. This same Misha had previously been an atheist intellectual, an engineer. But when the Lord touched his soul, this shocked him so much that he took upon himself a severe ascetic way of life and became a fool for Christ. After my meeting with him in the monastery he disappeared. We heard that he had been arrested and shot at the whim of an interrogator.

It was a very difficult and frightful time when I visited the monastery. "Pray to St. Macarius and the Iveron Mother of God!" Father N. consoled me. The icon of the Iveron Mother of God at the monastery was a special one. The Holy Virgin was painted in full monastic attire in mantle and with a prayer-rope in her hands.

The superior of the monastery, Bishop Macarius, had taken the schema, hardly ever left his cell, and rarely conversed with the pilgrims, except for some of his spiritual children. Several times we met him in the corridor and in church. But finally I had the opportunity to visit him and talk with him. Closed-up, serious, sad, he made a strong impression on the pilgrims; and if anyone conducted himself noisily or in general unbecomingly, or missed church services, Vladika through his cell-attendant asked such a person to leave the monastery. Young people were rather afraid of him and tried hard not to infringe the strict monastic rules.

Matins began at four o'clock in the morning, followed by the early Liturgy. There followed, at nine o'clock, the late Liturgy and a moleben, which ended between noon and one o'clock. Then there was the meal. At four o'clock there was Vespers or the Vigil service, an akathist, and after it a requiem service. The services ended between eight and nine o'clock in the evening. After this there was supper, and around midnight Nocturnes.

After spending some time, I finally had to go back to the city. At the station town, in the metochion church, I attended the All-night Vigil. For a long time I knelt before the icon of St Macarius. It appeared that with his look he encouraged me. And indeed, everything went well, and I returned without being arrested.

We visited the Hermitage several more times. In a severe frost at the end of the Nativity Fast we arrived at the monastery in order to be with the monks on the feast of St. Macarius. Father P. wished to receive the sacrament of Unction from Vladika. Our clergy gave Unction not only to the seriously ill; in those frightful times everyone lived under the constant threat of sudden violent death, or else in conditions where it was impossible to receive the holy Sacraments. Monks and some of the believing laymen usually gathered during the Nativity Fast or the Great Lent to receive Unction.

That day Father P. served the Liturgy in the small church on the site of the Saint's wilderness cell. Vladika Macarius came to pray together with us. At the direction of Father P. I came up to Vladika for a blessing and presented Father P.'s request for Unction.

"Why does Father P. wish the Unction so much?" asked the Bishop. "He has a heavy weight on his soul," I answered. Vladika looked at me sternly, and suddenly tears gushed from his eyes. He began to sob uncontrollably. "If you only knew what heavy trials lie ahead for us, how much suffering and torment! Our monastery will be devastated, our sacred things defiled!"

He continued to sob. A frightened novice was about to run up to Vladika, but Father P. restrained him. They all left quietly.

I stood before the sorrowing hierarch, profoundly shaken, seized by a presentiment of an approaching storm. He spoke as if to himself, oblivious of me. Then he gradually came to himself, walked up to the icon of the Saint, kissed it, left the church, and set out along the path to the monastery. His tall, dark figure stood out sharply against the pure white sheet of snow, which glistened under the bright rays of the winter sun.

Within a year his prophecy was fulfilled. The arrests of "Holy Night" (when thousands of the clergy and faithful were arrested in one night) broke out and swept from the face of the earth all the remaining monasteries and monastic and lay communities. That night I also was arrested.

Vladika was sent to a concentration camp in Siberia, and was a nightwatchman there.

Nun Veronica (Kotliarevskaya)

RUSSIA'S CATACOMB SAINTS

II. THE ORDEAL OF SCHEMA-BISHOP MACARIUS

This is his story, a tale of the condemned homeless wanderings of a Catacomb Hierarch-confessor, whose only crime was that he was a successor of Christ's apostles and that his heart belonged first of all to Christ.

Schema-Bishop Macarius, in the world Cosmas, was the oldest son of many children of the Vasiliev family. He was born in Guba village in Tikhvin province of Novgorod in 1871 and from his childhood was drawn to church services and its otherworldly singing. As a teen-ager he went to Petersburg, where he often visited the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra and listened attentively to the inspiring sermons of Hieromonk Arsenius who was a professional missionary primarily against sectarians and schismatics. The latter was quite popular and his name used to appear often in the press, and he was known and respected by Pobedonostsev himself.

With the aim of creating a missionary-oriented monastery with Mt Athos typicon, he revived the St. Macarius the Roman Hermitage, located in the marshy wilderness of the Novogorod region, not too far from Petersburg. By the turn of the century, St. Macarius Monastery was already well established with 200 monks; it bad a stone church and four major stone buildings, a metochion in a nearby town and a guest house — all of which attracted and gave consolation to many visitors.

When the young Cosmas first arrived at the monastery at the age of 23,he found himself in the midst of a group of other young aspirants for monastic and missionary life. As a novice he chopped fire wood and did other manual labor as his obedience, as remembered by one of his friends, Fr. Conon, who came there together with him. In 1897 he was tonsured by Abbot Arsenius and given the name of Cyril. By 1900 he was already hieromonk and head of the monastery metochion in Luban where he stayed for the next five years. In 1906 Father Arsenius went to Mt. Athos as a missionary to combat the new heresy of ''name-worshippers,'' and Father Cyril was made his successor as the Abbot. Fr. Arsenius unfortuately succumbed to the heresy he went off to fight and never returned to his monastery. The monastery, however, continued to flourish and even the Revolution did not touch it due to the impenetrable marshland of its location, for truly, it was pointless to the Bolsheviks to organize anything on its premises.

SCHEMA-BISHOP MACARIUS

In 1923, according to the decree of Patriarch Tikhon, he was consecrated bishop by Hierarchs Seraphim of Kolpinsk and Micah of Archangelsk, who gave him the title of Bishop of Luhan, the small town where the monastery metochion, or ''podvorye'' with the guest-house was located. At that time many new bishops were made so that, in view of the constant arrests, at least some bishops would be left to govern the flock. However, the same year Bishop Macarius was arrested. The Bolsheviks, having inflicted an artificially created famine of their own making, when hundreds and thousands were dying from starvation, now forced the Church leaders to give up church valuables: chalices, crosses, etc., with the pretense of helping the victims of hunger. In actuality, however, they sold these valuables (church property) abroad to strengthen the Soviet power. And many innocent people perished during this time. For the supposed concealment of church valuables of St. Macarius' Monastery, its Abbot was arrested and condemned to five years' imprisonment. He was sent to ''the Crosses''—the infamous Leningrad prison, then to Solovky concentration camp and other prisons, which were designed according to Lenin's plan to simply liquidate the undesirable ''thinking'' element of the general population. Then he was in the colonies for the forced exiles, where he looked after cattle and performed other menial labor. After three and a half years there, he was set free thanks to an amnesty and returned to his monastery. There, in order to dedicate himself entirely to prayer and to have less contact with worldly life, he accepted the great schema with the name of his beloved St. Macarius—the founder of his monastery.

He lived upstairs in a cell; his cell-attendant was Hierodeacon Bucol, a former peasant boy from a neighboring village. Daily he celebrated early Liturgy in the side altar, not pontifically, but as a simple priest, only with the small omophorion over his phelon. He attended all other services standing on the cliros, always wearing the embroidered schema cape (see his photograph, p. 369). He was always deeply engrossed in prayer and seemed to live in the world of the saints. But, as was to be expected, he did not manage for long to avoid contact with the God-hating authority of the communists.

On February 18, 1932, during the "Holy Night" of the Passion of Russian monasticism, he was arrested again—this time with the whole of his brotherhood and that was the final end to the monastery of St. Macarius the Roman which had existed for so many centuries. Within a short time most of his monks perished.

Bishop Macarius was sent again to "the Crosses" where he spent two months of preliminary confinement, and afterwards he received a relatively short sentence of three years' "voluntary" exile to the city of Verny (Alma-Ata) which he spent in the prison of that city and only then was sent for a "voluntary" settlement in the village of George near the town Frunze. Because of his ill health he was relieved from work, but during nights he was compelled to guard hay. One night he went to church to receive confession, returning safely. For that he was again arrested and locked up in prison where he spent eight months under very wretched conditions.

In 1935, having completed the sentence of his "voluntary' settlement, Bishop Macarius came hack home, to the site of his monastery which now lay in ruins. What could he do? His cell-attendant, having had a similar prison experience, was still around. Together they settled in Chudovo, a town not too far from Luban. But now the question arose of how they were to live. Where could they obtain a livelihood? In the Soviet Union those who had completed their time of sentence were to be allowed, according to article -58, to receive their "living permit of residence" *only* if they showed their "work card" (a type of ID card). The Bishop however, did not have it and thus for several years had to exist without that "living permit". But God helped him and he lived illegally with a believing family.

During this time he served secretly as a catacomb hierarch, disseminating the Mysteries wherever needed, baptizing, ordaining priests, consecrating catacomb bishops. In 1937 the mass arrests of the clergy increased again, and he, hiding from his inevitable arrest, went to Central Asia where he spent a year. Then he returned to Chudovo where, finally, he managed to obtain the required "living permit". There he stayed until the war and the coming of the Germans, at which time he found himself in the middle of the front.

Fr. Bucol was with him all this time. The war was raging. With the increase of Soviet guerilla troops it was highly dangerous. They managed to escape to a neighboring village and sought shelter in a small cabin at the mercy of some people. Their stay was prolonged; the famine was fierce. The area even during peaceful times did not abound with food, for the soil of the Novgorod region is poor. One night the old lady of the house where they were staying saw a strange dream: a golden carriage drove up to her poor dwelling and in it was a majestic Queen who said: "I have an elder here; he is very tired. He must be given rest." Thus did the Queen of Heaven herself intercede for the suffering schema-elder. The next day a

Catholic priest came to the old lady and said, "I heard that an Orthodox bishop and his cell-attendant live here." Hearing this the bishop came out and the priest told him how they could escape west to the Pskov Caves Monastery. They immediately put their knapsacks on their backs, took walking staves and left for the monastery. Soon they safely reached their destination where the monks received them with love and honor. This monastery, after the Revolution, found itself on the territory of free Estonia and thus escaped the common fate of the thousands of other monasteries of the suffering Russian land. It was in a thriving state, peaceful and had a sufficiency of everything. The Bishop again began to liturgize daily at the dawn of day as he was accustomed to do and even began to dream of returning home to his beloved St. Macarius and to re-establish his monastery for the third time. But the Lord saw that this true confessor of His was ready for his eternal home. In the terrible years of life in Soviet Russia, he was revered by thousands of Orthodox people for his holy prayers, help, and kindness in serving his fellow brethen. Many people risked their lives and freedom in order to enlighten the sufferings of this Bishop during his innumerable exiles and persecution. To these he was a true zealot of Orthodoxy, who guarded the testaments of the holy Church at the cost of his personal suffering. The Bolsheviks could not break this righteous one. His sufferings earned him his crown. It was time now for him to go to his heavenly home.

In the night before April 1, 1944, the town of Pechory was severely bombed by the Soviets. They bombed the town for the whole night, in four strikes with intervals of 40 to 50 minutes. Fortunately for the monastery, the huge two-ton bombs fell outside the monastery. Within the monastery fell some ten bombs of smaller caliber. One of these fell across from the refectory and tore out an old oak tree by the roots. A piece of the bomb penetrated through the window frame into the cell of Schema-Bishop Macarius and killed him instantly. On the analogion in front of him there was an opened gospel and a prayer book; they were covered with the Bishop's blood. The clock had stopped at 9:47 p.m. All the monks were hiding in bomb shelters, but Bishop Macarius had refused to go to the cellar and had remained in his cell praying. The bombing caused the monastery much damage, and there was even more damage and many casualties in the neighboring town of Pechory.

Archpriest Gerasim Shoretz

Thus did this holy confessor meet his Lord—on the day of Christ's Resurrection, April 1st. The body of Bishop Macarius was buried in the caves from which the Pskov Caves Monastery takes its name. And so did Soviet bombs end the earthly life of a confessor of God's truth who had already suffered much inside the USSR, and who well earned the title that is his by right of a New Martyr of this much-suffering age.

III. THE HOLY NIGHT OF RUSSIAN MONASTICISM

A witness from Germany, Natalia Georgievna Kieter, shared with us her experiences of the terrible persecutions of Orthodox Christians at that time.

"The 'Holy Night', so called by the people, was the night of the 17th-18th of February, 1932. I remember it well because on February 16 my mother died. She had only recently accepted secret tonsure and was a nun in the world. On February 18 our spiritual father, Hieromonk Benjamin, was expected; he was to celebrate the funeral in our home. For a long time I waited for him, and finally telephoned him at his apartment. I was told: 'He cannot come; you understand.' A long pause followed, and I understood without words that he was in a dangerous situation. I wished to look for another priest but not a single one who was not a Renovationist was available in the whole of Petersburg. No church had a priest that day. I was in the Valaam metochion nearby. All the priests from there were arrested. Fortunately, I happened to find a kind Batiushka in the cemetery. He was not a Renovationist which was most unusual for it was only the Renovationists who were not arrested.

"Soon I learned of the tragedy that took place in St. Macarius Monastery and with one teenage boy I hastened there since I knew that not a single person was left there. The church was boarded up and it was guarded by NKVD agents. It was an incredible incident in our Soviet life. The holiest object of the monastery was the chains of St. Macarius which for centuries had been exposed for veneration by the faithful. They had to be saved.

On our way to the monastery we had to go through a dense forest and thick marshes. We barely managed to escape being sucked into a quagmire. Avoiding the roads where we might be spotted, we sang a moleben to St. Macarius. After a series of adventures we managed to reach the monastery. Breaking a window, we crawled into the church where we saw a whole box of church valuables still there. I took the holy chains of the Saint together with many icons and church books. St. Macarius covered us with his mantia from the eyes of the NKVD agents and miraculously we were not caught. I kept the holy chains at home until such a time as it would be possible to give them to the Church. But it was dangerous even for me to keep them. I therefore gave them for safekeeping for awhile to a friend, a young woman of kindred spirit and a co-worker in the vineyard of the Lord. She placed them temporarily in a drawer of her night table. Suddenly her brother, a young scholar, was arrested and accused of religious propaganda. The NKVD agents stormed into the house for a search. They turned everything upside down; they looked into every single box and only the drawer in which the chains were kept was not opened. The miracle was that, having found nothing, they set the brother free. Truly St. Macarius had protected us all. Soon after this incident I brought the chains to a certain nun who took them to Moscow. Where are the chains today?''

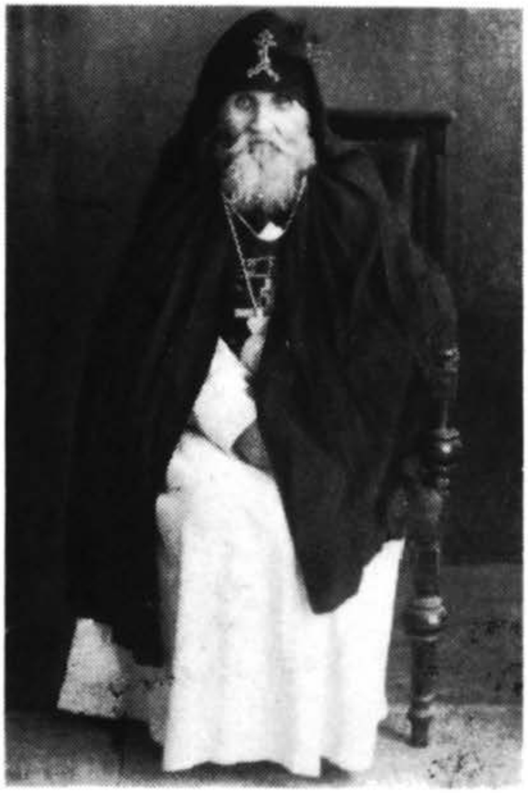
The date was February 18, 1932 (n.s.). It is a radiant and yet a terrible date, the Passion Friday of Russian monasticism—ignored by all and almost unknown to the whole world—when all of Russian monasticism *in a single night* disappeared into the concentration camps. It was all done in the dead of night and with the full knowledge of Metropolitan Alexis — about which there is sufficient evidence. In Leningrad there were arrested: 40 monks of the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra; 12 monks of the Kiev metochion (the other monks had all been arrested in 1930); 10 monks from the Valaam metochion; 90 nuns of the Novodevichi Convent; 16 nuns of Abbess Taisia's Leushinsky metochion; 12 monks from St. Theodore's Cathedral; 8 monks from the ''Kinovia'' of the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra's ''Big Okhotko''; a hundred or so monastics from various other Leningrad churches. In all — 318 people. That same night all the monks and brethren of the St. Macarius the Roman Monastery were arrested and brought to Leningrad as vicious criminals whose very presence was a threat to society; they were treated as deadly insects which must be stamped out. . .

The wave of arrests, like thunder, rolled over the Russian land, striking chiefly the monastic population which so recently had been the glorious guardian of the nation's morals and values. It also struck many of the white clergy and laymen who, in one way or another, were close in spirit to monasticism. For example, the flaming sermons of the parish priest Father Alexander Medvedsky were the cause of his arrest. All were sent to the Kazakhstan region from where almost no one ever returned.

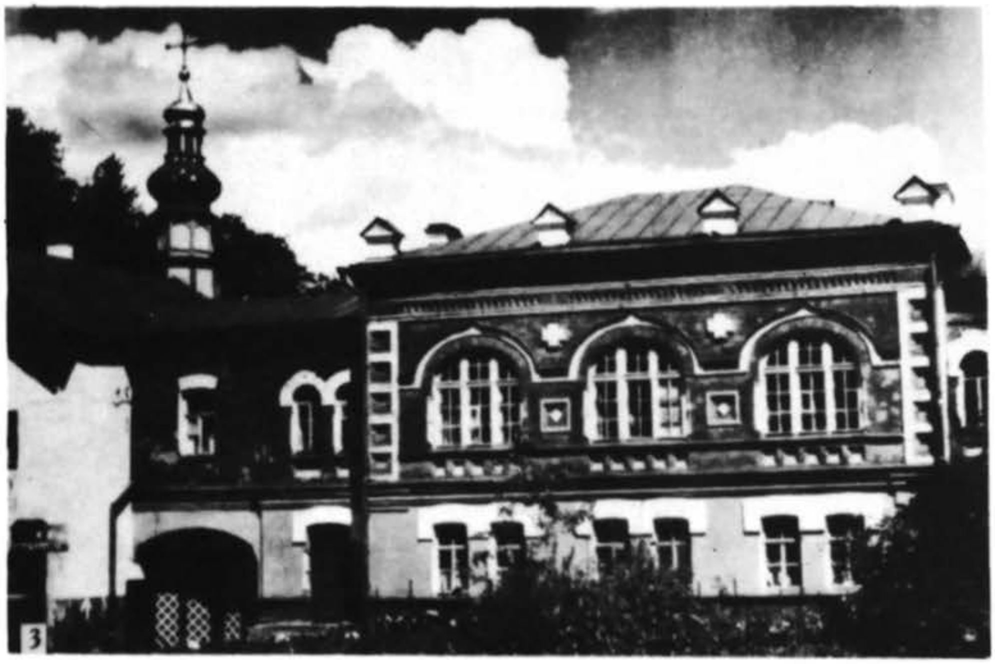
At the same time, in Leningrad alone many churches were closed and destroyed. (Levitin-Krasnov gives an accurate listing—see p. 222 of his book). Even the parish church to which the famous scientist I.P. Pavlov (of Pavlov's dogs) so ardently belonged (he went personally to Moscow to try to save the church) was struck, and, as soon as he died, this magnificent architectural monument dedicated to the Theotokos of the Sign (Znamenie) was blown up with dynamite (1937), and not a trace of it remains. By this time, of course, all of Russia's 1,400 monasteries—not counting sketes and newly-formed monastic communities—were closed and, with a handful of exceptions, obliterated.

''We all,'' recalls a witness, ''felt miserable during this frightful period, almost to the point of nausea. Everyone felt as though they [the authorities] had sadistically spit into our souls or beaten our mothers to death before our very eyes. It was a terrible feeling of hurt and rage, and yet one was helpless. I experienced this frightful state during that spring of 1932'' (Levitin-Krasnov). Little did these people suspect that soon after this ''Holy Night'', the freedom-loving United States of America was to recognize the Soviet tyranny as a lawful government. And all the while, the puppet-bishops of Sergianism declared throughout the whole world that Christians in Russia were free.

Sources: Nun Veronica, _Memoires_, published by Russian Life Press, San Francisco, 1954; Archpriest Gerasim Shoretz in Polsky's _The New Martyrs of Russia_, Vol. 1, p. 181, Vol. II, p. 284; L.P., _The Death of Schema-Bishop Macarius_, in "Orthodox Russia," — 13-14, 1944; A Krasnov-Levitine, _Likhie Godi_, Paris, 1977, pp. 215-20; Natalia G. Von Kieter, manuscript. (All in Russian.)



Schema Bishop Macarius



Pskov-Caves Monastery Refectory building where the holy bishop was killed in a ground-floor cell

Father Nicholas Zagarovsky

25

Father Nicholas Zagorovsky

IN MONASTICISM HIEROMONK SERAPHIM

Commemorated Sept. 30 (†1943)

> *Holiness is not simply righteousness,*
> *for which the righteous merit the enjoyment*
> *of blessedness in the Kingdom of God,*
> *but rather such a height of righteousness that*
> *men are filled with the grace of God*
> *to the extent that it flows from them upon*
> *those who associate with them. Great is their*
> *blessedness; it proceeds from personal experience*
> *of the Glory of God. Being filled also with*
> *love for men, which proceeds from love of God,*
> *they are responsive to men's needs and upon*
> *their supplication they appear also as intercessors*
> *and defenders for them before God.*
>
> Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch

AFTER 1914 I. M. KONTZEVITCH (†1965) attended Kharkov University and rented a room in the house of Father Nicholas Zagorovsky. He often acted as server for Fr. Nicholas in church and accompanied him when he served molebens in private homes, protecting from the people who always crowded around him. Thus the young Kontzevitch was known to Father Nicholas' reverers as a church-minded student, which at that time was a rarity. These reverers of Father Nicholas later, during the Russian Civil War, helped him a great deal, and one of them even saved his life.

Professor Kontzevitch twice gave a lecture on Father Nicholas in San Francisco. The material for this lecture was taken first of all from his own experience, but also from information received from Father Nicholas' daughter (Lydia N. Bobrishchevaya, who died in Paris in 1964) and chiefly, from Ulyasha Nozdrina, who accompanied Father Nicholas in his banishment and was tonsured by him a nun with the name Magdalena (now a nun in the Lesna Convent in France). The following account was compiled from the author's lecture notes by his wife, Helene Kontzevitch, and so it has a rather condensed and "understated" form—through which, nonetheless, the radiant and holy character of Father Nicholas shines undimmed. The photographs are from the collection of Professor Kontzevitch.

Professor Kontzevitch remarked that Father Nicholas' face reminded one of the Greek philosopher Socrates, but that the expression of his face was simply incomparable. It radiated kindness and friendliness, shining with an extraordinary goodness, attracting everyone to him.

Father Nicholas was descended from an ancient family of princes who became poor and went over to the religious calling. His father, Deacon Michael Theoktistovich, lived in a border region of Akhtirka. He was a man of meek character, not of this world. Apart from Church nothing existed for him. But on the other hand his wife, Parasceva Andreevna, nee Romenskaya, was a dominating woman. She had an exceptionally gifted mind and great talents. Left a widow very early, she brought up three children: Michael, Anna, and the youngest, Nicholas. Although the mother was illiterate, she understood the meaning of education and strove by all means to give an education to her children. The elder son, Michael, was very gifted, finished the seminary, entered the academy, but out of poverty he did not complete it and died early from tuberculosis. The younger son, Nicholas, grew up in the bosom of nature in the village of Gusynitsa together with peasant children. Young Kolya Zagorovsky was exceptionally lively, cheerful, and active. From his childhood he loved folk songs and likewise his native Little Russian dialect.

After entering the seminary he began to write poetry. But he did not like to study, and he especially hated mathematics. Nonetheless, Kolya was always among the best students in the seminary, being gifted with literary talent. In the older classes the teacher of Russian language organized plays. In this way there was uncovered in the young Zagorovsky an exceptional talent as a comedian. He had only to appear on the stage to evoke a storm of laughter in the public. The glory of Zagorovsky spread far beyond the seminary. A well-known actor-promoter in the Ukraine offered him to become a member of his troupe, with an enviable salary. But his mother would not hear of this: "I want to see you in gold vestments, otherwise I will curse you!" she declared to her son. He had to submit.

Father Nicholas' wife Ekaterina Ivanovna, was an educated woman, and they had two children. The village where he was priest was called Malyzhino, a complete backwater. There Father Nicholas had no place to manifest his richly endowed nature. One can well imagine the difficulties which the young priest endured. The icon of the Mother of God which he so glorified was undoubtedly a witness of his bitter tears and suffering soul. Indeed, how could such a lively nature be reconciled to vegetating in such a dull and wild backwater? And how deep must have been the inward battle of this man to turn a comedian into a celebrated spiritual preacher and pastor of the people! But such a rebirth indeed occurred: brilliant secular talents were transformed into spiritual ones. It was an evident miracle. The icon of the Mother of God which was revered by Father Nicholas as wonderworking was not at all a copy of the ancient icon called the "Search of the Lost." But Father Nicholas gave it precisely this title! This leads one to think that the young priest had been on the verge of despair, and the Mother of God herself had placed him on the right path.

The people loved Father Nicholas, but when it came time to give the children an education, he moved to Kharkov and became the priest of the hospital church of the city. Here Father Nicholas continued, just as in the village, to serve akathists in front of the icon and to give sermons. He was not disturbed that in the beginning only one or two old women attended these services, although of course he could not but be sad to see the people absent. But this situation did not last long; very soon the church was full to overflowing. His fame, as of another Chrysostom, spread throughout Kharkov. The small hospital church began to become so crowded that the walls became wet from human breath. At the Liturgy Father Nicholas would give two sermons, one of them devoted to the Gospel of the day. Someone once said, "Batiushka didn't speak long today, only an hour and a half." He left church hardly before three o'clock.

Under Father Nicholas a special choir was formed with which he visited private homes to serve molebens. After the moleben everyone ate and then sang "psalms"—religious songs. Many of these were written by Father Nicholas himself. I. M. Kontzevitch and another young man who was called Demochka sometimes accompanied Batiushka.

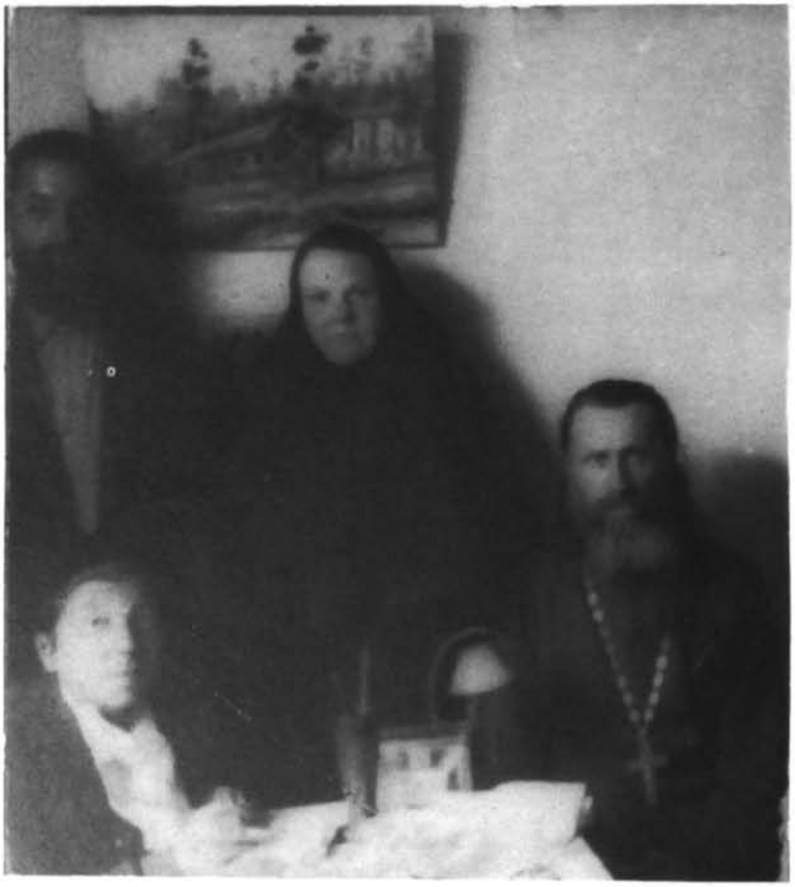
Around Father Nicholas there began to gather a women's monastery. Its organization was going forward at full tempo and all preparations for it had been completed when the Revolution broke out. Thus the monastery was never officially opened, but it existed secretly. One of the future nuns was Ulyasha Nozdrina. She had been intending to marry, but once she entered church when Father Nicholas was preaching. This decided her fate forever; she renounced her bridegroom and chose the monastic path. Father Nicholas chose Ulyasha as his companion when the time of banishment came.

Father Nicholas organized pilgrimages for the people, in one of which I. M. Kontzevitch took part. In this pilgrimage several thousand people participated. They walked in groups; before each group a cross, icons, and banners were carried. They walked while singing, but in such a way that the group following could not hear the singing of the group in front of it. Before the latter another cross, icons, and banners were carried, and something else was being sung. There was a multitude of such processions. Not long before the end of the road, Father Nicholas got up on a raised place and spoke to the people. He said that they were going to pray for rain, for there was then a terrible drought.

When they came to the place, the people disposed themselves in the forest around the Kuryazhsky Monastery. Since the churches could not hold all the pilgrims, the All-night Vigil was served the whole night through on an elevated place in the forest. This whole time until dawn, hieromonks were giving confession to the people. When in the morning the Liturgy was served, the communicants received Communion out of all the chalices which were in the monastery. This took half a day. When the Communion was finished, Father Nicholas said: "Now we are going to serve a moleben for rain. Everyone fall down and pray to God until the heavenly tears begin to fall on the earth." The people fell to the ground. And suddenly in the clear sky clouds began to appear; and indeed, on the dusty earth there began to fall, like tears, great heavy drops of rain, raising the dust on the road... When the rain began the people were about to throw themselves on Father Nicholas, but the monks surrounded him and conducted him to the monastery. Everyone went wherever he could for shelter. When everyone had found shelter, a tremendous torrent burst out.

Father Nicholas Zagarovsky and his grandson

Father Nicholas' pectoral cro



Nun Magdalena and Fr. Nicholas Masich (see p. 445) with another believer
from the Soviet Union after World War II, shown here with Helene
Kontzevich who recorded the life of Fr. Nicholas Zagarovsky
from the nun's lips

After the meal the bell-ringer came to Father Nicholas and asked: ''Do you order to ring for assembling the people?'' Father Nicholas reflected, bowing his head. Then he said: ''Ring!''

The rain continued to pour as out of a vessel... But no sooner had the bell sounded for the return trip than the rain immediately stopped. Returning home to Kharkov, the mass of people walked along the streets with branches in their hands and the enthusiastic singing of ''Christ is risen!'' The residents of the city opened their windows, struck with perplexity at the sight of such rejoicing in the moving mass of people.

FATHER NICHOLAS' popularity among the simple people was extraordinary. In Kharkov, after the Russo-Japanese War, there were especially many criminals. Bandits lived on Cold Mountain. But then one of them would become fatally ill. There were cases when Father Nicholas was sent for, and he would then be led at night along dark paths. His psalm-reader would tremble and shake from fear. In the cave where they were led stolen furs would be lying in the corner. But none of the thieves offended Father Nicholas. Only after the Revolution a certain bandit-revolutionary tore off his gold cross.

While he was still living in Kharkov, from standing on his feet during his long services and prayers, Father Nicholas formed sores on his legs. But he joked about himself, saying that if his legs would not carry him, then he would have to carry them.

In time Father Nicholas began to function as a starets with the blessing of the Optina Starets Father Anatole (Potapov).

The Revolution began. One can imagine that the mass of people who were grouped around Father Nicholas were not disposed in favor of the Revolution. Father Nicholas' influence was very great and widespread. Even at the very beginning, discounting all this, the Bolsheviks called Father Nicholas and offered him to enter with them into a certain agreement. From him there was demanded only one thing: not to give any sermons against the Communists. They even offered him a subsidy in gold for his charitable work. To this proposition Father Nicholas replied that he served the One God and no one else. Soon he was arrested and placed in prison. It may be that Father Nicholas' arrest followed upon his defense, together with a crowd of people, of the monastery which served as the residence of the bishop of Kharkov—who at that time was Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky. As soon as the news of Father Nicholas' arrest had spread, the square in front of the prison was filled with peasant carts, full of country provisions. As long as Father

Nicholas was kept in prison, all the prisoners were fed on the provisions brought to him.

Seeing such a great love of the people for Father Nicholas, the authorities decided that it would be calmer if he would be sent out of Kharkov. (He had been arrested another time as one of a group of 24 priests who had rejected the "Renovationist" church.) It was proposed to him to leave the city and go somewhere else. Father Nicholas, taking Ulyasha with him, went to Petersburg. Many nuns wanted to accompany him, but his choice wisely rested on Ulyasha—first of all because of her unlimited dedication and strong health. Jesting, he would say to her: "You haven't got a head but a pot." True, she did not understand a great deal, but she was devoted not in words but in deed. Who could have borne all that she bore!

And so Father Nicholas and Ulyasha found themselves in Petersburg. This was the time just after the so-called "Living Church" appeared. Walking about the city, Father Nicholas and Ulyasha went everywhere, avoiding the churches of the "Living Church". Once they entered a church which was near their residence. Here a possessed woman angrily threw herself at Father Nicholas with a scream: "Oh, you baldy, oh, you whiner—have you come here too to torture us?" The people who were standing around did not know what to think, looking at the humble figure of Father Nicholas, who was dressed in a simple peasant garment. But soon the people felt that it was not at all an ordinary man they were looking at, despite the fact that the exiles strove to stay in the shadows. Here is an example: One day Father Nicholas was in bed sick. The bell rang. Ulyasha opened the door and saw some gypsies standing at the threshold. "Does the Father live here that tells fortunes?" they asked. "No," replied Ulyasha. "But they gave us this address: 46 Borovaya Street," said the gypsies. "Tell the Father that they have stolen a horse from us." Ulyasha went to Father Nicholas and said: "Some gypsies have come but you can't receive them. Someone's stolen a horse from them. If you receive them, we're lost. We can't receive anyone." "All right," said Father Nicholas, "we can't receive them; but all the same, tell them to look for the horse at their neighbor's." A few days later the gypsies again appeared, but now with sacks full of provisions. They had found the horse at their neighbor's.

Here is another incident. Father Nicholas never went anywhere, only to church. Suddenly a woman came and begged him to give the Sacraments to a dying woman. Against all his rules, Father Nicholas got ready and went, taking with him the revered icon of the Mother of God, "Search of the Lost." In a garret on a bed a young woman lay unconscious. Out of her mouth there flowed a bloody foam. Two children were weeping bitterly. "Children," said Father Nicholas, "pray to the Mother of God—She will hear the prayer of children." He began a moleben with an akathist before the icon he had brought. Tears flowed in streams down the face of Father Nicholas; he was literally drenched with tears. After the moleben he was told: "But Batiushka, you haven't read the prayers for the departure of the soul!" "It isn't necessary," he replied. Soon the grateful children came to Father Nicholas and brought him flowers and an embroidered belt such as the clergy used to wear in Russia. After this the healed woman herself came. Although she had been unconscious during the moleben, nonetheless she had felt how a living power had poured into her. She became a devoted spiritual daughter of Father Nicholas for as long as he lived in Petersburg.

Here is another memorable case of Father Nicholas' clairvoyance. Father Nicholas and Ulyasha had to look for a new apartment, because a great many people had begun to come to them. They found a fine place. Ulyasha was encouraged and said happily: "How wonderful! Here, Batiushka, we'll put your bed, and here the table." But Father Nicholas stood pale and said nothing. Finally he turned to the landlady: "Tell us what happened here." It turned out that an agent of the secret police had hanged himself there. Of course, they didn't rent this place.

In 1930 Father Nicholas was arrested for refusing to accept the "Declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius and was imprisoned in the "House of Preliminary Confinement" in Petersburg.

HIS STAY IN Petersburg ended for Father Nicholas in the famous "Holy Night," as it was called by the believers of Petersburg, when in a single night in 1932 five thousand of the people most devoted to the Church were arrested.

The prison where Father Nicholas was confined was so overcrowded that the unfortunate priest of God stood on his feet for nine days until one of the criminals felt sorry for him and gave him a place under a table where he could lie down on the floor. After this Father Nicholas was sent to Solovki. His Matushka, accompanied by the faithful Ulyasha, undertook the long journey in order to visit him. When they both arrived and were allowed to see him, he came out to them shaved and emaciated. This was during a fast—but in giving provisions to the prisoners it was absolutely required that they be of meat. Ulyasha prepared cutlets out of lentils which the jailors took for meat.

After his stay in Solovki. Father Nicholas. together with other prisoners. was sent to the far north for settlement. They went by foot over the tundra, stepping from hillock to hillock. Mosquitoes tortured them. In one place the travellers spent the night in an abandoned chapel. Awakening, Father Nicholas saw that he was sleeping before the icon "Search of the Lost." This encouraged him inexpressibly, and he felt that he was under the protection of the Queen of Heaven. He alone made it all the way to the assigned place: the rest had not survived, but died on the way.

Ulyasha, devoted as always, did not leave Father Nicholas here either. She came to him alone in a wagon, carrying a basket with provisions. She travelled thousands of miles. The way went across the taiga. Often she was struck by the spectacle of the northern lights shimmering in the sky. God Himself preserved her, and she arrived safely. Father Nicholas was watched by guards. Ulyasha did not lose heart. She would call the soldiers "Detka" or "Vanka," slap them on the back, and remind them of their own mothers. "This is my uncle," she told them; "he took me in when I was an orphan and raised me. You have a mother too—Remember her. Let me go and eat with my uncle!" Permission was given, and Father Nicholas went to eat with Ulyasha.

Finally, Father Nicholas served out his time of punishment. He was released to live wherever he wanted, except in Kharkov province. Looking at a map, he saw that the nearest city to Kharkov was Oboyan in Kursk province. And so they went on a train and were already approaching their goal. They were telling each other that once they got out of the train they had no idea what to do next. Their conversation was overheard by a simply dressed woman who was travelling with them: she turned out to be the wife of a banished priest to whom she was travelling for a visit. Looking closely, she recognized in Father Nicholas' face the face of a priest. She informed her fellow-travellers that in Oboyan there was a secret convent. She gave them the address. The travellers went there and rang. The nun-gatekeeper opened the door for them. Finding out that they were asking shelter for the night, the nun categorically declared to them that this was impossible; they themselves were hiding, and if they began to allow outsiders in it would immediately attract attention to them. "All the same, tell the Abbess about us," Father Nicholas requested. The Abbess didn't let them wait for her, but quicky came out and in a friendly manner invited them to share a meal with the nuns. And what had happened? In the night of their arrival Saint Seraphim had appeared to the Abbess in sleep and said: "Seraphim of Kharkov is coming to you; receive him." Batiushka burst into tears and said: "I am Father Nicholas." But in actuality he had been secretly tonsured in Solovki and called Seraphim. He did not expect that he would return to the world and that his life would be prolonged, and he had accepted secret monasticism. At this time Ulyasha did not know this, but later when living in Oboyan, while Father Nicholas was serving the Liturgy she heard him, when receiving Communion call himself Hieromonk Seraphim.

They were not long in finding an apartment in Oboyan. Father Nicholas never went out in the daytime. Only late at night he went outside to breathe some fresh air. He served Liturgy every day. The Proskomedia with an endless commemoration of the living and the dead lasted for hours. Sometimes his Kharkov nuns would come to him at night, and thus he guided their secret monastery.

Ulyasha lived in Oboyan in complete obedience to Father Nicholas. She was tonsured a nun by him and called Magdalena. She found work in a hospital as an orderly. Unexpectedly there came a decree: everyone who was semi-literate was obliged to take an examination according to the ten-year program, or else he would be fired. Father Nicholas began to give lessons to Ulyasha. He wrote a composition with the title "Morning in the Village" and told Ulyasha to take it with her to the written examination and copy it out when the theme was announced. The theme which was given was, in fact, "Morning in the Village." For the oral examination Father Nicholas recommended that Ulyasha learn by heart a certain poem. "When they ask who knows it, raise your hand." And in fact they asked about this poem, and Ulyasha was the only one who knew it by heart. With mathematics it was more complicated, as Father Nicholas himself was very bad at mathematics. He opened a textbook of algebra and showed a page which Ulyasha was supposed to memorize. On the examination they asked about this very page. Ulyasha passed the ten-year plan and from an orderly she became a nurse.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR came. From the hospital in Oboyan a group of medical personnel was sent to the front, and Ulyasha was a part of it. Father Nicholas was to remain alone—old, sick, unfit for work, tortured by prisons and banishment... At the railroad platform the seating of the medical personnel took place. Everyone was called by name and placed on the train. Only Ulyasha was not called. The train left.... Ulyasha hastened home. And what did she see? Father

Nicholas was standing at prayer. The rug on which he was standing was all wet from tears.

The city of Oboyan was taken by the Germans. Soldiers were placed in all houses. The little house where Father Nicholas was staying was also seized. He was offered to sleep on the floor. However, the German soldiers were so struck by the appearance of this Elder, who remained constantly at prayer, that they not only did not take his bed but even took off their shoes when they entered his room so as not to disturb him at prayer.

Soon he was taken home to Kharkov in a hospital car. Here Father Nicholas performed Divine Services in his house with a great number of people present. The war was coming to an end. The German retreat began. Father Nicholas decided to go to the West, for, as he said, he had no strength to face the Bolsheviks again. When he crossed the boundary of his fatherland he wept bitterly. But the heavenly fatherland was already awaiting him. His life was cut off when he arrived in Peremyshl. He had a stroke. He was placed in a hospital, where he lived several days. He died on the eve of the Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God, September 30 (October 13), 1943.

Everything happened exactly as he had described his own death in a poem written twenty years before this while he was in Petersburg, at the very beginning of the Revolution.

In this poem are described the last warm days of early autumn. The flowers have finished blossoming. The autumn leaves are falling to the ground. Dying nature faintly smiles, and together with her the sacred poet himself finishes his earthly days. Just as he described, so did it all happen in actuality; precisely such an autumn set in. Father Nicholas, who was not distinguished by any particular beauty in life, became more than handsome on his deathbed. His face bore the stamp of another world, of a beauty inexpressible in words. As it were a door was opened into the desired other land, where "the just shine like the stars."

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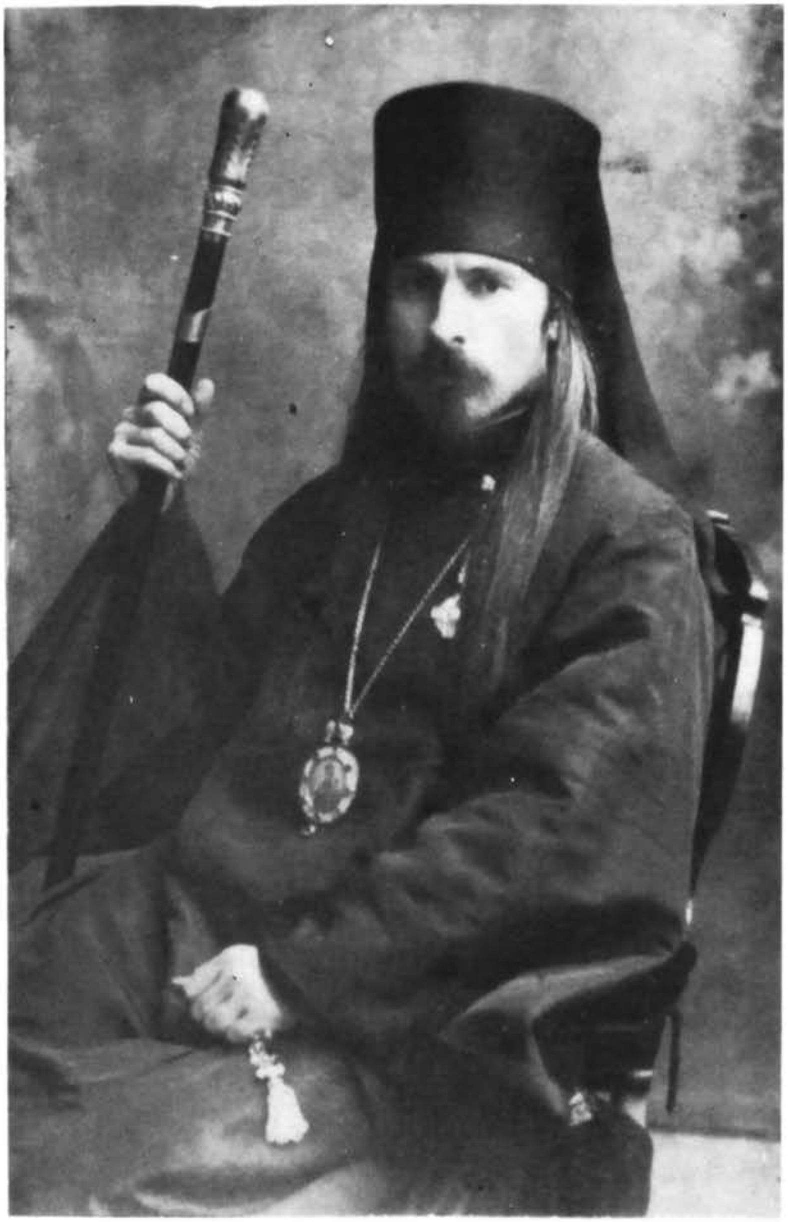
* When the Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch was informed not long before his death that this biography of Father Nicholas was being prepared, he greatly rejoiced and said that during his youth in Kharkov he knew Father Nicholas well and greatly venerated this righteous confessor.



Bishop Onouphry

Bishop Onouphry in his later years

26

Bishop Onouphry

A SAINT OF KOLYMA AND MAGADAN

Commemorated June 12 (†1938)

> *The Lord appeared unto me saying,*
> *Yea, I have loved thee with an*
> *everlasting love.*
> (Jeremiah 31:3)
>
> *Without Me ye can do nothing.*
> (John 15:5)
>
> *With God all things are possible.*
> (Matt. 19:26)

WHILE THE SOVIET authorities were fanatically seeking to uproot Christianity and to install in its place an unrealistic, utopian dream of earthly bliss—an idea condemned by the Church Fathers centuries ago as the dangerous heresy of chiliasm (or millenarianism)—God raised up men who were able to bring into reality the happiness which the Communists only promise. Now that over 60 years have passed since the mythical aims of Communism were put to the test with such destructive and negative results, it has become clear enough for anyone with common sense to see that it was a mistake, a deceptive temptation from the devil, a satanic *prelest.* In fact, if there ever was a doubt about the existence of evil upon earth, the Soviet experiment with Communism has *scientifically* proved that evil does indeed exist, not as a theory, but as a living reality. True bliss, on the other hand—the state of deep happiness and quiet contentment in man's heart, as well as in his society and its laws and government—is it not also a reality? The deep, all-encompassing joy that rests within a man's bosom, producing goodness in every aspect of his activity—is Christ! The saints of God have found the source of this happiness. Having their feet well-planted on the ground, not giving themselves over to impatient flights of fancy, they realistically possess true happiness. It is to be found in the unbroken chain of sanctity that stems from Christ Himself and has been passed down from His disciples to us today.

Just prior to the outbreak of the Revolution, Russia produced a whole "cloud of witnesses," who sought not only their own personal happiness and that of others in the saving enclosure of the holy Orthodox Church, but labored hard to transfigure secular society by means of the principles of life in Christ. One such benefactor of society was Bishop Onouphry. who, in giving his life to Christ. gained true happiness while still in this world, and shared this with his brethren. The people who knew him and recorded for posterity some precious crumbs of information about him. all bear witness to the profound spiritual joy they experienced in contact with him—who was with Christ—and patiently await that longed for moment when the gates of Heaven will open and they shall again behold their beloved Archpastor.

At the turn of the century. Russia abounded with holy monasteries. Almost every month a new monastic community would spring up, some of them quite abundant in true zealous ascetics. A number of high-quality religious magazines began to come off the press ("Strannik," "Soul-Profiting Reading," "Christian Reading," "Soul-Profiting Converse," "The Russian Pilgrim," "The Russian Monk," "The Rudder," etc.). Pilgrimages to holy shrines and remote monasteries and sketes were very popular. In a word, the spread of the monastic ideal was enthusiastically supported by society which gave to it its best sons and daughters as offerings to God. And these "sacrifices" eagerly embraced their chosen path and soon produced an abundant harvest of God-pleasing virtues for the whole of Holy Russia.

The literature dealing with the righteous men and women of that time shows the intimate union which existed between men and their loving God, Jesus Christ. Many accounts from the lives of these God pleasers were widely published and inspired God-fearing youth with a realistic and accessible ideal towards which to strive. One youth who embraced this ideal early in life, was the future saint-ascetic, Hieromartyr Onouphry.

BISHOP ONOUPHRY

II. THE YOUNG BISHOP

BISHOP ONOUPHRY WAS born some ten years before the turn of the century. He was the son of Maxim Gagaliuk and was given the name of Anthony at baptism. Evidently God called him to the monastic path relatively early, judging from the fact that he became bishop soon after completing the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. We do not know which monastery he first entered, but from the recollections of Bishop Nektary (of Seattle) we can surmise it was somewhere in the south of Russia. Once, on a visit to a parishioner, he was offered some grapes. Declining the offer, he told about an incident in his early years in the monastery which illustrates his ascetic zeal. The monastery was situated in a vineyard, and in order to go from church to his cell, he had to pass through the rows of vines. One Sunday (or feastday) in summer, having received Holy Communion at Liturgy, the young Onouphry was returning from church to his cell with a very holy feeling from the reception of the Divine Mysteries. The abundance of ripe and fragrant grapes attracted his attention. He stopped. There was peace and sunshine around, and a quiet peace filled his heart. "How glorious is everything created by God," he thought. He decided to break off a cluster of grapes and eat it. But since it was still mid-summer, it was not easy to break off the branch. Having tried unsuccessfully to break it with his hands, he stooped down to bite it off with his teeth. At this moment the thought flashed through his mind: he, who had just partaken of the Heavenly Food of the Precious Body and Blood of the Son of God Who created the world and everything in it, was lowering his dignity and, like a dumb beast, biting with his mouth. As a reminder of this, he resolved never to touch grapes again in his life. This he fulfilled; thus imitating St. Sabbas the Sanctified who never ate apples after having eaten a stolen fruit in his childhood.

In 1923, he was consecrated bishop and sent to the town of Krivoy Rog in the Cherson region. While still an archimandrite he used to visit it, and now he became its first bishop.

He is first remembered as young, fair, with long blond hair, ascetic looking, not very tall, but stately and reserved. His mother later recounted that his "usual food was a prosphora, some potatoes without salt and a piece of bread," and that he spent his nights in prayer. His face was emaciated, pale, with refined features, as if carved out of ivory or fragrant wax; truly, it was the face of a saint.

His talks were impressive, especially those given when he served the Divine Liturgy. He seemed so down to earth, so accessible, so close to the people, as if he were some close relative, yet he was always a little distant, removed from the prosaic part of life—a man not of this world. At the same time he was full of life, as if he knew the secret of deep, elemental happiness, and he was exceptionally strong emotionally. People immediately sensed his spiritual strength, were drawn by his warmth, and followed him into that other-worldly reality where he led them by means of the church services where God is close and present in the Holy Mysteries; the inspiring stories of righteous God pleasers who, thanks to their nearness to God, performed wondrous deeds in His name; and his flaming sermons that fortified the faithful with burning zeal to follow Christ to Golgotha. His own faith, so clearly manifest in his words and deeds, acted like a spark igniting the faithful. But soon it seemed as if the time had come when all the holiness acquired by Holy Russia was put to the test in view of the rising lawlessness and the frenzy of the God-fighters.

Bishop Onouphry's cathedral was the Church of St. Nicholas, which later, in 1930, was destroyed just as the Ascension Church had been in 1928. The Protection Church remained standing, but it was turned into a granary. The relatively short period of Vladika Onouphry's bishopric in Krivoy Rog was a veritable triumph of Orthodoxy. People of all ages filled the church to capacity whenever he served. They would come from the neighboring villages and would stand through the long services. Many young people forgot all their various amusements, such as movies and dances, and under his influence continued to be close to the Church despite the godless propaganda of the Komsomol (Young Communist League).

In the summer of 1924 Bishop Onouphry was arrested. When the news arrived about his departure, the believing townspeople rushed to the railroad tracks. The train slowly left the station. Vladika Onouphry stood at the window grating and blessed the people. What occurred next is impossible to describe: in great sorrow people fell down on their knees in reverence before their beloved Archpastor. Everyone's tears and loud cries created one large sob which hung over his orphaned flock until finally the train disappeared from sight.

The next year Bishop Onouphry was assigned to Elizabethgrad, head of the Odessa diocese. In 1927 he was arrested again and exiled to Krasnoyarsk. Then he served in the cathedral of Kursk. He was a zealous accuser of renovationism in the Odessa region. It should be noted that the beautiful Odessa Cathedral, which eventually was blown up, was being closed by the Communists at approximately this time. After the usual degrading process of taking down crosses, etc., the doors were boarded up and for a long time it remained in this state. One university student, who lived near-by, chanced to notice that on several occasions in the dead of night a light would flicker inside. She made an investigation and discovered that satanists were performing their abominable "black mass." Her further bold investigations proved to her that the Soviet Communists, while openly propagating the lies of atheism, in actuality are anti-theistic and practicing satanists (as was made public after the coming of the Germans). This is evident also in their hatred of churches, icons, crosses, clerical and monastic garb—all that reminds them of the God they hate. (See "Orthodox Path," 1960, p. 89, in Russian.)

III. FIGHTER AGAINST RENOVATIONISM

The mother of Bishop Nektary (of Seattle) was a spiritual daughter of the Optina Elder Nectarius, with whose blessing she was later tonsured a nun. Although the anti-Christian forces were already operating powerfully during the 1920's, it was still possible, although with great difficulty, to have contact with the Optina saints. She was in constant contact with them while living in Kharkov at that time. Her son Oleg (the future Bishop Nektary), who was then an altar boy, recalls the following:

"Bishop Onouphry arrived in Kharkov in 1924 at the height of the battle between the Orthodox people and the Living Church, and instantly proved to be a true pillar of Orthodoxy. One's first impression of him was of a man not of this world. He was tall, very thin and pale, as if he had tuberculosis. He was a great ascetic; this could be seen in his every gesture as well as in his deep concentration, self-control, and constant prayer. When he would enter the altar, his presence alone would evoke a profound silence even among the noisiest acolytes. It was as though a saint had entered. During the Divine services, nothing else mattered for him but prayer. Many times I had the opportunity of helping him in the altar. He served with exceeding reverence. Truly, he stood before God while he celebrated the Liturgy, entirely engrossed in prayer. During services he demanded absolute silence from the people. Once, while he was standing on the cathedra during the Divine Liturgy, the church being full of people, a mad woman loudly yelled out several times, "Vladika Onouphry," which echoed throughout the church. People immediately started to push her out of the church while she continued crying slowly, "V-l-a-d-i-k-a O-n-o-u-p-h-r-y." He had such self-control that he did not even blink his eyes, and continued standing as if at attention before God Himself. He served as if he were in another world; often it seemed to us as though he were present only in body.

"He stayed no more than two or three years in Kharkov, and during that time everyone came to love and respect him very much. My mother was under the spiritual guidance of Optina Elder Nectarius. But since Optina was very far from Kharkov, and the times were so bad, there arose many questions which she was unable to ask Elder Nectarius. She turned to Bishop Onouphry and thus he began to visit our home quite often. He likewise had great respect and veneration for the holy Starets Nectarius of Optina and had many answers to his questions brought from the elder by my mother on her visits there. Unfortunately, I was too young to understand and remember it all.

"Not far from Kharkov there used to be the St. Nicholas Convent; it was closed by the communists, and all the nuns had to leave. The abbess rented several houses in Kharkov where the nuns lived and kept their old rule of monastic life. Bishop Onouphry also resided there. He attended trapeza, conducted talks, and in general, his presence was very uplifting in those terrible times of persecution.

"The Soviets used the Living Church as one of their weapons, and in the whole of southern Russia only two small churches remained true Orthodox; the rest were either destroyed, closed, given over to sacrilege, or turned over to the Living Church. Thus, the small church on the outskirts of Kharkov was not only packed with Orthodox worshippers, but at one time had as many as 24 priests and 12 bishops regularly celebrating. Of course, these clergymen were from closed churches or were being transferred from one place to another. They were thus homeless, and the Bishop of Kharkov, Constantine, gave them lodging. Bishop Onouphry's see was actually in Elizabethgrad and his residence in Kharkov was only temporary.

"The following incident shows Bishop Onouphry as a loving pastor and a strict observer of pure Orthodoxy. Once there came to him a priest from some distant church; repenting that he had concelebrated with the clergy of the Living Church, he begged Bishop Onouphry to receive him back into the bosom of Orthodoxy. To this Bishop Onouphry answered that it was beyond his power and advised him to go to Moscow and see Patriarch Tikhon (which places this incident before the Patriarch's death on March 25, 1925); but meanwhile he called the abbess and ordered her to receive the poor hungry priest with maximum love, invite him to trapeza, keep him warm, and provide him with everything necessary for the journey to Moscow. But he himself would not be present at trapeza so as not to concelebrate with a clergyman of the Living Church in any way."

A spiritual daughter of Bishop Onouphry, who preserved for us one of his portraits (see pp. 383-384) and a beautiful poem dedicated to him, recalls him in the following way:

In the years when Bishop Onouphry was in Kharkov, he attended a certain anti-religious meeting in the opera theater on Rymarsk Street. Bishop Onouphry, answering one atheist orator, asked him: "Christ was sold for 30 pieces of silver; for how many have you sold Him?" This question provoked such a clamor that the meeting was broken up and the people were told to leave. The question of the real reason for atheism was settled!

When Bishop Onouphry was incarcerated in Kharkov prison, the Soviet authorities paid one drunken criminal to kill him. The criminal broke through the wall of the jail and, with an axe in his hand, he confronted the bishop. "What do you want?" the bishop asked. "To kill you." "What have I done to you? Well, go ahead and kill me." But the very sight of the Saint so touched the conscience of the hardened criminal, that he was moved to tears. The criminal threw down his axe and remained sitting at the feet of the bishop weeping as the bishop told him about Christ. This is the picture which met the eyes of the jailors when they came in. And so, the criminal was locked into the same cell as the bishop.

CHILDREN MARTYRS OF KHARKOV

While Bishop Onouphry was in Kharkov, there was a fire in the new Baturin grammer school on Maskaloff Street. The mother of three children who attended that school related the following:

On the eve of the Annunciation, March 25, the atheist administration deliberately presented an evening of anti-religious movies with refreshments. All the school children were invited, as well as all preschool children. During the showing of the film, which was directed against the Mother of God, a cry was heard: "Fire! Children, run for your lives!"The whole projection booth was in flames. A frightful panic arose; there was no one in control. The wooden staircase was already in flames, and in terror and desperation, the children began to jump out of the windows from the fourth floor. On the street under the windows a heap of children's bodies began to grow. The first ones were all dead, but the woman's children remained alive because they fell on top of the other children. The narrow Baturinsk alley was heaped with corpses and the panic-stricken crowd of citizens prevented the firefighters from rendering assistance. This particular mother, when she ran to the school, saw her eldest daughter Vera holding a sheet together with other children, upon which the children escaping from above were jumping down. The terrified mother anxiously looked for her two younger children in the tumult of people and bodies, and soon she found the shoes of her youngest daughter Lucy. Pulling her out all bloody and covered with soot, she saw that she was alive, as was her oldest son Victor. God had saved them. In two days the common funeral of the victims of the fire took place without, of course, the participation of any clergy. Along the entire length of Maskaloff Street, the doors of almost every apartment house were open, and when the funeral procession began to move, two, three or four little coffins would come out of each door and join the procession. It was said that many parents who had lost their children in this fire suffered mental breakdowns. In view of the rumors in Kharkov concerning the causes of this catastrophe, the head of the NKVD published an article in which he warned that for the spread of "false rumors" the propagators would be prosecuted. The total number of children who perished in this fire was never officially publicized. These innocent sufferers were victims of the communist plague and their blood, like that of Abel and of the infants of Bethlehem, cries out to heaven.

BISHOP ONOUPHRY

IV. THE CLAIRVOYANT PASTOR

On October 12, 1926, Bishop Onouphry was arrested again. This time he was exiled to Old Oskol where, although under surveillance, he had relative freedom. His fame as a holy man was recorded for us by a woman now living in New Jersey, Maria Mostiko.

Old Oskol is an old country town, located on top of a small hill, which previously had been noted for its beautiful churches. These churches were all destroyed by the Bolsheviks. Nothing had been built in their place, and in some places there were the ruins of old walls which threatened to fall down upon the unwary people walking past. The town was surrounded by small neighborhoods and hamlets, and a majority of their churches were closed or used as granaries.

Originally, the authorities exiled Bishop Onouphry to Old Oskol, an insignificant provincial town, in order to limit his influence among the people. Before this time he had been under arrest and lived in exile.

"At the end of the 1920's, I lived with my parents near the town of Old Oskol in the Kursk province. We often used to go to that town to visit my older sister who was studying there until 1929. Next to the house where my sister lived, I had a girlfriend. During one of our visits, my friend, having found out that we had arrived, immediately ran to my sister's and began to beg me to go with her to the St. Nicholas Church, saying that today a holy hierarch, Bishop Onouphry, was serving. We came to church and I was instantly struck by the Bishop's appearance—he was thin, tall, with a pale, almost transparent face, and he looked very much as Christ is portrayed on icons. He served peacefully, without hurrying. The church was filled with people, who prayed with great concentration. But what struck me most of all was this: when, after the end of the Liturgy, I came up together with others to the bishop to get his blessing, he called me by my name, having never before seen me.

"The next day I was the witness of a great miracle: when the bishop raised the chalice during the consecration of the Holy Gifts, suddenly a child yelled loudly. It turned out that this child, in the arms of his mother who stood opposite the altar, saw through the holy doors that the bishop was all aflame, and this is when he cried out, pressing himself against his mother: "Mama, look! The priest will get burned—he's all on fire!" The child could not quiet down for a long time, repeating the same words in spite of his mother's continual assurances that there was no fire. Everybody in the church heard the child's screams, but they did not see the flames. When, after the end of the Liturgy, the mother approached the bishop to receive his blessing, she told the bishop what had happened, but the bishop, in his humility, said that it had only been the child's imagination.

"Sometime later, at the end of the 30's, one pious woman, who unfailingly attended church daily, told me and my mother-in-law about a miraculous healing she had received through the intercession of Bishop Onouphry. This woman had suffered from a rash which not only caused her pain and itching all over her body, but also forced her to live absolutely isolated because it was extremely contagious. Two nuns who had visited her had also broken out with this rash. No medical treatment brought her any relief. In such a condition she would not allow herself to visit Bishop Onouphry, fearing to infect Vladika; but upon hearing about the healings that took place through his prayers, she finally had the courage to write him a letter—as to a saint. One day she knelt before an icon of the Holy Trinity that was in the corner over her bed, and for a long time with tears she prayed to God, calling also upon the bishop as a man who was pleasing to God, to grant her healing. Having become tired from kneeling at prayer, she leaned on the bed and fell asleep. In a light dream she saw that the bishop was next to her and together with her was praying before the holy icon; then he took the icon from the wall, blessed her three times, hung the icon back in its place, and disappeared. Here she woke up. She saw that the icon and everything else remained as it was before, but she instantly felt that she was completely healed from her sickness; there was no itching, the scabs had disappeared, and she was absolutely healthy. Simultaneously, the two nun-sisters who had caught the infection also received healing. She washed herself and instantly ran to the bishop to thank him for the miraculous healing. After this miracle she would visit the temple of God every day and never missed a service."

Here are several more cases testifying to the clairvoyance of Bishop Onouphry.

1) One young girl who often went to church, and who loved very much the church services which Bishop Onouphry conducted, had a fiance who lived far away. Periodically he would live in Old Oskol; perhaps he was a student who received special training there. He had met this girl, they had fallen in

love, and the young man had promised to return and marry her. The bishop praised this young fiance and told the girl that in order for him to return and for them to be happy in their family life, it was necessary for her to continue going to church, to read at home every day the Holy Gospel, and to receive Holy Communion every Sunday faithfully. Three days before the appointed time of the arrival of the fiance, the girl became sick; the bishop gave her Holy Communion—and she quietly passed away. The mother of the girl wept and kept accusing the bishop that he had not warned them of the approaching tragedy, but the bishop answered that if he would have said to the young, blossoming, healthy girl that she would die soon, she would have fallen into despondency and would have been deprived of the Heavenly Kingdom. Since she spent that time attending church, confessing and receiving Holy Communion, she became betrothed to the Heavenly Bridegroom Himself, who took her to Himself.

2) In the church in the village of Yamsky, there served an old priest, Father John, who was burdened by the repression of the Church—with the closing of the churches and the arrest of clergy. In order to console him, Vladika told him that he would serve in this church until his death. Batiushka believed the words of the clairvoyant bishop, and all the parishioners were overjoyed about this. However, soon Father John was arrested together with other priests; some of them were shot, and the others, together with Father John, were put on a train and sent into exile. The old priest was absolutely exhausted with the journey, and according to the unutterable mercy of God, the administration considered that he was a hopeless case and threw him out of the train, saying, "Let him die there; why should we transport a dead corpse?" Some peasants from a neighboring village happened to be passing by, and recognizing in him a priest because of his appearance, and discovering that he was still alive, they took care of him, saying that the Lord had sent them His angel. Father John recovered, returned to his small village of Yamsky and continued to serve in his church until the coming of the German Army. When news came that Fr. John had died in Yamsky, people who had been skeptical when Father John was arrested and exiled now became convinced of the genuine clairvoyance of Bishop Onouphry.

3) When I lived in Old Oskol during the time of the Second World War, I often used to visit a woman who had a cow and used to sell us milk. Once when I came to her as usual for milk, I heard the moans of her sick brother, whose

legs had turned black up to the knees and caused him excruciating pain. I was shocked to hear this woman yelling and cursing her suffering brother. This brother previously had had his own apartment, but he had lost it and they would not accept him into the hospital because the hospitals were filled with wounded people. I began to reason with her, reminding her that it wasn't Christian to treat her sick brother in this way. But she continued to mistreat him and threatened to throw him out into the street like a dog, since he was worthy of even worse sufferings. Explaining this seemingly cruel attitude, she told me the following frightful story about her brother. He was a communist and worked as an executioner for the NKVD. He was well paid and enjoyed a wonderful apartment. His work consisted of shooting priests and other condemned people. He even boasted that he received an extra 50 rubles for each neck. (The Soviets had the custom of forcing condemned men to turn their backs to the executioner who would shoot them in the back of the neck.) This brother was hoping to kill Bishop Onouphry for which he expected to receive 100 rubles, but the Bishop had prophesied: "He will not see my death—I will die in exile—but he will be frightfully punished for his evil deeds." And thus were his words fulfilled.

4) I often saw a priest who had left the priestly rank and had become an atheist in order to please the Bolsheviks. He even used to blaspheme God and slandered Bishop Onouphry. Vladika prophesied that he would undergo a horrible death if he did not repent. And what do you think happened? He fell down a flight of stairs from the second floor. For his atheistic propaganda he was paid a good pension. Soon after this accident, he fell from the same staircase a second time and was killed, leaving behind a wife and three small children.

5) Once Vladika was traveling at a very slow pace because of a crowd that thronged around the carriage. One atheist student, having heard much about the bishop, desired to come close to the carriage to take a look at him. He was very surprised to see that the bishop, having noticed him in the midst of the crowd, beckoned to him lovingly and bestowed upon him God's blessing. Later this student came to believe in God, and desired to take upon himself the priestly rank. He was then arrested, exiled, and shot, as his friends informed his parents upon their return from exile.

6) In the Streletsky neighborhood in the town of Old Oskol, there was a church in honor of the miracle-working icon of the Kazan Mother of God which the Bolsheviks were planning to use as a granary. The parishioners fervently prayed and asked the prayers of Bishop Onouphry that their church might be saved from defilement. They hid their local miracle-working icon and with fear awaited what would befall them next. The bishop prayed and told the parishioners that they should not lament for the church would not be used as a granary. And truly, when the Soviet chiefs came to inspect the church, they lifted part of the floor boards and it appeared to them that under the floor there were millions of worms, while at the same time the parishioners who were present there saw absolutely no worms. The Soviet officials issued a report on the unsuitable condition of the church for use as a granary—and in this manner the church was preserved, although it was closed. The church remained closed and unused until the coming of the Germans, after which it was immediately opened and Church services were conducted there once again.

Equally remarkable is the next miracle, which was reported by witnesses. The bosses were amazed by the enormous number of people who attended the services of Vladika Onouphry in Old Oskol, and they decided to summon him to their office in order to forbid him to conduct missionary activity on such a large scale. When Bishop Onouphry entered their office, he was startled to see how these Soviet bosses, as if moved by an electric current, leapt up from their seats, dropping their hats. As the bishop left, they reproached one another, asking why each of them had leapt up and removed their hats. They agreed among themselves that upon his next visit they would sit quietly with their hats on. However, nothing came of it: when Bishop Onouphry was again ordered to report to their office, the same thing occurred. The bishop, being clairvoyant, told them that they should pick their hats up off the floor and remain seated. They replied nervously, "No, sir, we can stand a little and you may sit down, rest for awhile, and then go home; when we need you again we will call for you."

Vladika Onouphry arrived in Old Oskol with his elderly mother. There Vladika came under observation by the NKVD and was forbidden to visit the homes of his parishioners, even the sick, which caused him great sorrow. Having become convinced that it was impossible to hide a light under a bushel even in a rural area of the province, and that the people came from far away to see the beloved archpastor, the godless authority again arrested Vladika and exiled him. His mother died soon after his exile from Old Oskol.

The loving parishioners began to send him parcels at the prisons, as earlier they had brought them to his apartment. Vladika would distribute everything to the needy and exiles who were together with him in the concentration camp. The prisoners loved Vladika very much and always tried to fulfill for him the most difficult work. The bishop was exiled altogether twelve times.

Finally, the parcels which were sent to him began to be returned by the postal system, by which one could surmise that the Bishop was no longer among the living on earth, and that he was now in the heavenly abode together with the rest of Russia's New Martyrs who had suffered from the God-fighting communists.

V. THE ROAD TO KOLYMA

And so, on November 9, 1929, Bishop Onouphry was arrested again and it was reported that he was sent to the Urals. During the years of the barbaric Soviet "collectivization" and the exile of the best wheat-growers of all Russia into the concentration camps, the clergy was also systematically liquidated. The Metropolitan of Odessa, Anatole (Grisiuk), who always commemorated Metropolitan Peter as head of the Church, was arrested at this time; his sister, wife of the future Metropolitan Alexis of Vilna (also killed by Soviet spies), died from shock at the moment of his arrest. There followed the arrests of his vicar-bishops: Parthenius (Brianskikh) and Onouphry, who was evidently free for a short time. By the end of 1934 and up to the Second World War, the south of Odessa and Cherson had no pastors or churches whatsoever in spite of the infamous Sergianist betrayal. Bishop Onouphry was sent to the infamous eastern Siberian concentration camp system known as the Baikal-Amur Magistral.

It took over nine months to get to the city of Chita in central Siberia. The prisoners were shipped in freight cars like cattle under heavily armed escort. At every stop a thorough search was conducted on the roofs and under the cars for would-be escapees. Prisoners who died during this part of the journey were thrown down from bridges into a river or tossed off the train into the forest. In Chita all the prisoners were thoroughly searched, checked against the lists several times a day, frisked all over the body and forced to go to the camp baths where their hair was cut and shaved; clergy were no exception: one guard would hold the arms behind the back, a second would hold the head, and the third would shave the hair.

On the third day all prisoners were lined up and forced to march to the harbor, where they were placed on a barge and shipped at first along the River Shilka and then the Amur River to Blagoveshchensk. There they stopped overnight and the next day again the same roll call, the search, the sanitary inspection and the determining of each man's classification. Of course, as always, the commission found everybody quite fit for work. The same day they were forced to march on the outskirts of the city to another camp in long lines of over a thousand men, the "labor army" as the Soviet bosses used to call their victims. While walking past Bugunda River, they saw on a highly elevated picturesque location, surrounded by forest, the former Holy Dormition Monastery (founded in 1905); on the top of the church, instead of a cross, hung a red flag with the cabbalistic emblems of hammer and sickle. This camp already several thousand prisoners. The new prisoners were moved into barracks made out of boards full of holes; they were surrounded by the usual barbed wire fences and watch towers with machine guns. In the morning, after some watery lentil "soup", they were marched past the watch towers to their work area to dig the ground. Some work brigades were issued shovels, others were given picks or carts to haul dirt. Some prisoners were there for years, dragging dirt a mile-long distance, back and forth.

In this ant heap-like camp there were already several bishops, some over sixty years old. Besides Bishop Onouphry, there were Bishops Anthony (Romanovsky), Joseph (Orekhov), and Barsonouphius (Luzin). None of these concealed their clerical rank; they gave advice to the other prisoners and helped them in any way possible. Here, working days and sometimes also nights, the hierarchs recalled the words of Christ uttered to St. Peter: *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not* (John 21:18).

Any kind of church service was, of course, strictly forbidden, but we have records of how it was done nevertheless, in the tradition of the catacombs: funerals were served, people baptized, priests ordained, even bishops consecrated (this was possible when several bishops were together). As a rule, all prisoners were constantly shifted from one camp to another, so the hierarchs had to perform the ordinations quickly before they were sent further north into the dreaded land of Kolyma and the "Arctic Death Camps".[1]

Kolyma is a mountainous region along the Kolyma River, its tributaries extending from the Arctic Ocean south to the Okhotsk Sea at Magadan. This area became important in the early 30's as a prospective site for large scale gold production, but it has been known since the middle 30's throughout the world as the location of a large labor camp system where indescribable atrocities were committed by the Soviet state. Magadan, the main port serving this area, is the site of a large transit prison camp and is often used to refer to the whole northeastern corner of Siberia with its vast number of death camps dotting the mountainous interior. In these death camps "enemies of the people" labored like dumb beasts in sub-zero conditions, perishing from cold, hunger, and fatigue—usually a short time after their arrival on account of the lack of adequate food, clothing and shelter. Although the original purpose of these camps was the production of gold using expendable prison laborers, within a few years they became sites for the extermination of millions of people whose only "crime" was that they held ideas contrary to the atheist regime. After being carted like cattle across Siberia and shipped several thousand at a time from Vladivostok to Magadan or to ports on the Arctic Sea, the prisoners were sent to various places in the interior where they were forced to work just a short time before being put to death. The only ones who ever had a chance of survival were common criminals who were sometimes strong enought to endure the harsh conditions. When they became physically useless, the "counter-revolutionaries" were simply exterminated—hundreds each day. From the late 30's to the late 50's Kolyma was probably the most ruthless concentration camp in the entire world, comparable to the Temnikoff and Solovki camps of the 20's and the Baltic-White Sea Canal camps of the 30's; in each of these millions perished annually as a result of a lifestyle designed to undermine the very existence of the human spirit. Kolyma is the epitome of Soviet achievement, the fruit of chiliasm, a foretaste of the Kingdom of Antichrist on earth.

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[1] See a new book by that name on the subject by Robert Conquest.

VI. A LAMB LED TO THE SLAUGHTER

To reach Kolyma, the prisoners were packed onto the boat "Sakhalin" and shipped down the Amur River to Nikolaevsk. From there on American-made ships (bought from the United State in exchange for the gold of the Kolyma slave-labor), the prisoners crossed the Okhotsk Sea to the land of Magadan. Having landed in Okhotsk, the slave-prisoners were driven on foot for miles under heavily armed escort through the dense taiga to the shores of the Kolyma River. In the forest during the day, and especially at night, clouds of vicious stinging mosquitos would transform the unprotected, exhausted and totally wasted human beings into bloodstained, disfigured, barely moving shadows in rags. Everyone forced out his last strength so as not to collapse otherwise the guards would "pin him down," that is, they would drag the unfortunate one into the bushes and "pin" into his stomach a sharp stake, so that he would not escape. It was well known that a guard was not responsible for the murder of a prisoner, but for an escaped one he risked his own head.

To confirm such inhuman actions, let us recall what the Solovki and Baltic-White Sea Canal prisoners recorded. During the time when the executioners Dzerzinski and Bahrman were in charge of Solovki, there was exiled a priest by the name of Uspensky and his son. The son soon got a job as a guard. He would escort groups of prisoners from one camp to another; apparently his cruelty earned for him the trust of the NKVD. One winter, during a blizzard, he had to escort a group of prisoners among whom was his own father. Already old an sick, the father could not walk straight through the deep snow; he would often stumble and fall and apparently slowed the procession. Then the depraved son ordered his father to step aside into the bushes, and there he shot him. The shots echoed through the forest and the Solovki blizzard, to the singing of the north winds, buried in snow-white vestments the new hieromartyr. The next spring the body of the archpriest with a bullet in the back of his neck, was discovered—incorrupt, the holy relics of a saint. But the son Uspensky, having performed such an abomination, was rewarded by the NKVD bosses by a promotion and enjoyed a temporary confidence in their midst. For the next several years he was the chief in the

Bear Hill camp and all concentration camps beyond the Onega Lake, until he was shot in the Ezhov Purge. During his time another cruel villain was his assistant in the Povenetsky region of the White Sea Canal, a former Old Believer, Ikonnikov.

The survivors of the grim expedition finally reached the river. On the shore there were several ghostly barracks and a dilapidated dock for the steamers. Here all the prisoners were loaded onto a barge and a relatively small steamer, the "Cuckoo Bird," pulled out and travelled down the river along its golden shores and through virgin forests, bringing a new crop of slaves to the gold mines where already tens of thousands of them, condemned to an early death, were swarming like ants, knowing neither winter days nor summer nights, extracting with their very life's breath golden bull for the godless Soviet idolatry.

The Kolyma concentration camp of the Magadan territory was the same kind of establishment as all Soviet camps: the barbed wire fences, the towers with the ever vigilant guards, the evening roll calls, the meager food and inhuman work conditions... The only difference was that from Kolyma there was no place to run, and no one would sacrifice himself to the wild animals. Days of rest were often turned into work days in honor of some Soviet achievement or one of the many tyrants like Lenin or Stalin. In the beginning of September, the navigation usually stopped. and the shipments of new slave-laborers postponed until spring. The people who perished during winter would be replaced in summer with new "enemies of the people," and so it continued year after year. This was the atmosphere in which Bishop Onouphry was to finish his earthly sojourn.

One witness, Archbishop Athanasius (Sakharov) wrote: "Particularly unforgettable were the times of utmost despair, when we grieved for the Paradise lost—the possibility of conducting Divine services of God. Good Friday comes and we are in the forest, sinking in the mossy mire with the danger of falling into a so-called 'wolf-hole' covered with snow; whoever fell into them would be lost instantly. In such an atmosphere we would confess to each other, we would open to each other the most secret, the most sacred thoughts. . ."

Many believers, upon recognizing in their co-worker a priest or bishop, and knowing well that the future held no hope of ever getting back to life in the world, asked these secret bishops to tonsure them monks; in this way they accepted their lot as a monastic obedience. These secret monks filled the empty gaps in the ranks of the visible spiritual warriors, combatting by the purity of their redeeming sufferings and passion, the evil forces of the enemy of our salvation. We know some who were tonsured in this way and we know that their testimony is true. There they encountered genuine saints. Who can comprehend the sweet visions which were revealed to these innocent lambs of Christ as they were (and still are today) being led to the slaughter? Who can say what price is being paid today for the preservation of Orthodoxy in the midst of this evil generation? It is indeed through their prayers and their sacrifice that the world still stands.

Here the last trace of Bishop Onouphry's earthly existence was obliterated. His holiness undoubtedly led many to Paradise. In 1938 rumors reached his distant flock in the south of European Russia that he had been shot while attempting to escape, but this rumor was unfounded. Almost no one returned from Kolyma.

It is understandable why the communists found it necessary to torment and destroy such a good man: evil despises goodness and light, because it reflects God. Those who actually believe in communism as an idealistic philosophy, of course, cannot explain why, to bring happiness to men on earth, it was necessary to torture and destroy such an epitome of goodness and virtue as Bishop Onouphry. But we can understand this on the basis of the Orthodox patristic teaching on spiritual blindness: the communists cause such suffering because their conscience is impure and adulterated; they are in a state of deception and their lofty dreams of human betterment are only a mirage concealing the actually murderous intent of their system.

May the example of those who, like Bishop Onouphry, suffered and gained the victory over the servants of Antichrist, save us from this terrible deception! Amen.

F.H.

Sources: Polsky, ***Russia's New Martyrs***, Vol. II; Regelson, ***Tragedy of the Russian Church***; Conquest, ***Kolyma, the Arctic Death Camps***; M. Mostiko, "Bishop Onouphry" in ***Orthodox Russia***, No. 6, 1972; Archimandrite Seraphim Verbin, "New Martyr Archimandrite Gennady" in ***Orthodox Path***, 1963; personal memoirs by Bishop Nektary of Seattle, Vera Kontzevitch, Rev. Sergei Shukin, Matushka Alexandra Pawliusik.

27

Priest-Martyr Elias

AND HIS MATUSHKA EUGENIA CHETVERUKHIN

Commemorated February 16 (†1934)

> ***When a man fully and positively turns***
> ***to the side of eternal truth, or else***
> ***completely turns away from it,***
> ***he no longer lives and is obliged to die.***
> ***He has gone through everything that this***
> ***life can give and has become ripe***
> ***for the future.***
> St. Herman the New Martyr

The life of Father Elias is closely bound up with the righteous wife given him by God, who fully shared his sufferings and joys. Evgenia was a very pious girl who had thought of becoming a nun, but at the counsel of Elder Barnabas of the Gethsemane Skete had begun to look for a pious bridegroom. Elias' parents had laid great hopes upon him, since he was a brilliant student at the university, but after meeting Evgenia the two began to read spiritual books in earnest; he quit the university and an enticing career, and entered the seminary at the St. Sergius Holy Trinity Lavra.

The family of Evgenia lived in obedience to holy elders. Her mother knew many elders and frequently went to see them. Seeing this, Elias Nikolaevich also wished to have an elder who would guide them. Evgenia advised him to go to the Gethsemane Skete to Elder Barnabas. The next day the young seminarian went to the Elder. The Elder met him with kindness, sat him down, brought a samovar from somewhere and began to give him tea to drink; for the whole time he said, stroking him on the head, "You are my martyr. You are my confessor." Then he gave him several instructions for guidance and let him go. The happy seminarian returned to the guest house. Finally he had a spiritual guide to whom he could entrust his whole life. In the evening he went to church and with astonishment heard that they were commemorating the newly-reposed Hieromonk Barnabas! What indeed was his astonishment and grief when he found out that only a few hours after he had left him, Elder Barnabas had died. Upset, he returned home.

But the Lord did not leave unfulfilled the sincere desire of his believing soul. After some time his fellow students offered to take him to the Zosima Hermitage, which was not far from the Trinity Lavra, to see Elder Alexis the hermit (who was later to draw the lot to elect Patriarch Tikhon). Elias willingly agreed. The Elder received them warmly and soon became the spiritual director of Elias and his fiancee. When he first saw them together, he cried out: "What a tall one he is, what a small one she is!" And indeed, Elias was very tall and strong, a regular knight, while Evgenia was a small and fragile girl. With the blessing of Elder Alexis they met each other twice a month in the house of Evgenia, and twice a month he would write her a letter, which Evgenia's mother would always read in advance; and thus several years passed. Elias finished the seminary successfully and began to study in the Theological Academy.

At this time Evgenia was 25 years old, which at that time was considered not young. There was a new law at that time, that the students of the Academy could become married. A certain elder of Moscow, in obedience to whom Evgenia's family was living, tried to hurry up their wedding. Elias obeyed the elder and went to Evgenia's parents. But here there was an unexpected hindrance: Evgenia's father absolutely refused to give her to him in marriage, since he had no means to supprt her. Elias became angry and left, slamming the door after him. Evgenia's mother, however, persuaded him to ask her father again. And he had to repeat the whole time that they would be able to live on their own means, although in fact all their money consisted in a small sum which Eugenia had earned giving music lessons, which with the blessing of her mother she was putting away for her dowry. Finally the father agreed. They celebrated their wedding quietly and modestly and right away set off on their honeymoon journey to the Zosima Hermitage to prepare with their beloved elder for the reception of Holy Communion.

Evgenia's whole family had great reverence for Elder Alexis. One of her relatives, who later become a monk, often went to the Zosima Hermitage and over and over saw the same dream: It seemed to be some kind of feast day. The founder of the monastery, the ascetic Zosima, stood in the midst of the royal doors and was anointing everyone that came up; after the anointment, in their shining white garments, they went straight through the royal doors. This dream, especially because it was repeated so often and because the women also were entering the altar, was very disturbing for the young man. Finally, when he saw the dream for the sixth time, he went to Elder Alexis. The Elder did not explain the meaning of the dream, but only asked whether there were many people. "There were many, Batiushka, a whole crowd." "Well, glory to God, glory to God," the Elder repeated joyfully.

The young married pair spent almost a month in the monastery. They returned then to Moscow and rented an apartment in Sergiev Posad, near St. Sergius' Monastery. They lived in extreme poverty, but just as they had promised to Evgenia's father, they lived on their own money. Matushka always noted that for their whole life she had never owed a penny to anyone, and they lived so poorly that Evgenia could afford to put only six pieces of firewood a day into the stove to warm up the apartment which was therefore never very warm.

When their first child was born they immediately sent a telegram to Evgenia's sister. When she came she declared that she had known of the birth of the child before the telegram had arrived. "But how?" they asked. "St. Seraphim appeared to me in a dream and said: 'Go and congratulate them. A son has been born to them and his name is Sergius.'" And indeed, they called their first son Sergius, and the second son Seraphim.

Fr. Elias finished the Academy before the Revolution broke out. After being ordained, he served for a short time in a poorhouse church and then was transferred to the church of St. Nicholas in the Tolmachev district of Moscow, where he served until his arrest in 1932.

Fr. Elias was a fervent priest. He never shortened the services. He read out loud the stichera which were to be sung, and often read the canons. Matushka went to church every day and directed the choir. In that sad time after the Revolution had broken out, the church of St. Nicholas in the Tolmachev district was a source of spiritual light for many believers. One woman parishioner of Fr. Elias remembers: "Oh, our church in Tolmachev, shining with purity! But it was so cold that your feet froze to the floor!" Still, in every circumstance Matushka did not lose hope in God.

Thus, once on St. Nicholas' day Matushka returned from church and, putting her hand in her pocket, discovered that it was empty; and on this day they usually gathered the parishioners at their house for a modest meal. Matushka quickly returned to church and asked Batiushka if he had some money. With a guilty look he gave her only a few copper coins. There was nothing to be done about it, and Matushka went home; on the way she reflected how good it would be if she only had two roubles. She would buy some peas, a little oil, and something else, and there would be plenty. With such thoughts she went home.

It was a warm spring day, and in front of their porch there were immense puddles. On her feet she had only cloths wound about, since it was impossible to get shoes in those days; and with this footwear she began to jump through the puddles. Suddenly she caught sight of some carefully folded rouble notes, which like two little boats were floating on the water. She dished them out and began to ask the passersby whether they had lost two roubles; but they all said no. Then Matushka, thanking God and repeating once again, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and everything else will be given you,' she set about preparing a frugal meal.

Another time, Matushka and Batiushka were setting out for the Zosima Hermitage. At that time the Monastery was no longer able to feed those who came, since there was barely enough to feed its own monks. But it was just on this day that they had not a penny for themselves. Still, Matushka did not change her decision to go, but she went to an old psalm-reader to ask whether he might look after the children in their absence. On the way she repeated, 'Place your sorrow upon the Lord, and he will sustain you.' This was something that characterized Matushka; the words of Scripture which for most people were simply words from books that are learned mechanically, for her were alive and real. Coming home she unexpectedly came across a large object wrapped in a linen sack. Matushka, fearing that it was a corpse, began to run away; but then she saw that the object was too small and she forced herself to return. Deciding that it was probably a child who had been abandoned, she looked into the sack and literally froze to the spot; it was full of all kinds of food—meat and oil, bread, and, in a word, everything they needed for the journey. Probably someone from the country had come to sell them in the city, but, fearing the militia, had thrown the sack by the side of the road.

Of course, not everything ended so successfully for Matushka, but still she never lost her presence of mind. Once an unknown woman came to her and offered to sell for her a whole bag full of groceries for a rather small sum; with difficulty she gathered one penny at a time and gave the money to the woman, who brought Matushka to the train station where, according to her words, the groceries were located. When they came to the station the woman told Matushka to wait for her and she would go to the station booth for the groceries. Matushka waited for several hours before finally going herself to the booth, only to see that the door was locked tight and that there was no one there. It was difficult for her to return home, where her hungry Batiushka and children were waiting impatiently. On the way Matushka thought of how one should pray for such people; after all, they help our salvation—while, to be sure, at the same time they destroy their own souls. Entering the room and encountering the astonished glances of the family, Matushka said; "Get up, children, let us pray; Glory to God for everything! They have robbed us!"

But all these losses were insignificant in comparison with the grief which Matushka suffered when her youngest son Vanya died. He was playing with some older children on the street and caught a cold, and since Matushka could not look after him all the time (she was singing every day in church), the cold turned into meningitis. At this very time Matushka broke her arm. Everything piled up on her at once: the fatal illness of her son, her broken arm, hunger; but all the same she managed every day to be at the church services. Vanya's sufferings were so intolerable that he himself said: "Is it true, Mother, that I too am a martyr?" He died on the same day as Elder Alexis. Fr. Elias in his funeral sermon remarked that on this day a very small child had died after suffering more than grown-ups, although he had not sinned as much. The nun who served in the altar came up to Matushka and said: "Dear Matushka, I congratulate you—you have one son already in paradise!" Towards the end of her life Matushka forgot about Vanya. She would say: "I had five children." And then with a guilty smile she would add: "I do not remember everything from my life; the Lord has taken away from me the most difficult part."

II

Fr. Elias led an ascetic life. Only two weeks in the year would he spend with his family in the country, where the children would rest, while the church was being repaired and cleaned. In general he served every day without omitting or shortening anything in the services. In the evenings after the Divine services, there were spiritual conversations.

Matushka saw to it every day that her Batiushka would manage to eat before midnight. He came home every day after 11 o'clock. In the morning Batiushka would still be sleeping, and already some spiritual daughter would run up to see whether he was up yet (the majority of the parish was composed of young people). Matushka would never murmur at these vexations, but would only say: "A certain slave of God came by; she is not very happy." And then later this slave of God would be called to the kliros for a talk. Later, Bishop John said to Matushka (she went to his church after Fr. Elias' death): "Your Batiushka was my ideal, and you were his faithful helper in everything."

In that difficult time of hunger they were able to preserve the beauty and splendor of the church and the richness of the vestments. How proud they were of their Batiushka when he served in splendid and beautiful vestments, or when he would read to them and explain the works of the Holy Fathers. Once, after an especially successful talk about St. John Chrysostom, Batiushka walked past the kliros and Matushka told him quietly: "He has shown us the height of the humility of wisdom." (from the Saint's troparion).

It was the year 1932. Everywhere there were searches, arrests, and exiles. Several parishioners of the church were arrested, together with many of their relatives. Batiushka was called to the NKVD, and they promised that if he were to give up the priesthood he would not be touched. Some friends of his were trying to get him a good position as an art expert in the Tretyakov Gallery. Not knowing what to do, Batiushka came home, and Matushka strengthened him for his struggle of confession.

Soon it was Fr. Elias' namesday and some guests came. For some reason Batiushka came to life and was very happy and joked. Only late in the evening did the guests depart; in a few minutes one parishioner returned and whispered to Matushka that the police were watching her very carefully. Matushka thanked the girl and went outside. A group of three men came up to her and asked where the Chetverukhins lived. Matushka pointed to the house and gave the number of an apartment, while she herself quickly ran home. "Batiushka, they have come for you!" she said as she entered the room. Batiushka put on the epitrachelion of Elder Alexis and read the prayer before the beginning of any good work. He had not managed to finish the last words when there was a crude knocking at the door. Matushka met them with a low bow: "Come in." They were in a hurry and asked, rather confused: "Isn't it you who showed us the way?" "Yes." "Well, get ready." In general they were very kind and allowed them to say farewell to each other. While Matushka was quickly getting together what was necessary, they made a superficial search. On the way out one of them said: "Well, Matushka, you can sleep peacefully; we will not bother you any more."

"How can I sleep peacefully now?" replied Matushka. The whole night she spent in prayer and tears, but towards morning, all the same, she dozed off. And then she saw an extraordinarily magnificent Lady who told her: "Do not fear. They will not do anything to your Batiushka in prison. I will intercede for him."

"Do you really have authority in the prison?" Matushka asked in astonishment. "I have authority everywhere. Do not fear; they will not do anything to him in prison; but you pray to Adrian and Natalie." And with these words the splendid Lady vanished. Matushka awoke with perplexity as to why the Mother of God (she understood that it was precisely the Most Pure Virgin who had come) had commanded her to pray to Adrian and Natalie. When she read their life (August 26) and found out that Adrian was a martyr and Natalie had suffered out of compassion for him and strengthened him, it became clear to her why the Most Holy Theotokos had told her to pray to these saints.

After Batiushka's arrest new misfortunes came to Matushka. They were thrown out of their apartment, and for some time they wandered about, until they were taken in by a certain family. The children were thrown out of school; their immense library was stolen. But the greatest loss was the death of their only daughter. Mashenka was the last child in the family. When Matushka was expecting her, she went to Elder Alexis, who was still alive at that time. He met her with the question: "Who is there?" "Sinful Evgenia," she replied. "Are you alone?" "No, Batiushka, there are two of us." Going up to get his blessing, she asked "Batiushka, what will I have?" "A daughter, only you will have to sew her a wedding garment." Matushka was surprised: "of course, if it is a girl one has to sew a wedding garment." And only after Mashenka's death did she understand the words of the elder—that her daughter had become the bride of Christ.

The daughter died of a simple children's disease; her weak organism (she was only five years old) was unable to fight against the hunger and the cold and the disease all at once. In such circumstances (at that time Evgania's mother had also died), she was strengthened, as she herself said, only by one thing: the prayer of St. John Chrysostom, which she repeated unceasingly—"Glory be to God for everything."

III

Because of all these misfortunes, it was only after two years that Matushka was able to go to her husband, who was then in exile in Krasnaya Vishera River district. It was difficult to get to this isolated northern village during the muddy season of spring, but finally she reached her destination. She brought a Gospel and a little bottle of holy water for Fr. Elias. The Gospel was taken away from him immediately, but they were interested in the bottle. "What is this?" "For you it is simply water, but for me it is holy. It is my medicine," Matushka replied. And she was allowed to give it to Fr. Elias.

Batiushka, as Matushka Evgenia immediately noticed, had changed frightfully. He did not bless her, but on the contrary said, "Here I no longer function as a priest." He looked as if he had been tortured, as if broken. This meeting lasted a long time, and Batiushka was able to tell her everything.

In the prison where they had brought him after his arrest, he was placed in a special cell. The small room was absolutely full, and at first glance there seemed no free space at all. Batiushka did not know what to do, but someone called out to him: "Crawl under the bunks!" This was not so easy for Batiushka, who was so tall; but finally he managed to get under the bunks and lay down on the dirty floor, full of spit.

It was impossible to fall asleep in such circumstances, and the cries and cursing in the room would not permit it anyway. Batiushka remembered his spiritual children and how they had respected him, and he burst into tears. He related also how he had been driven to Krasnaya Vishera over the barely frozen snow. The thin layer of ice had immediately broken under his feet, and the prisoners with every step fell up to their waists in deep snow. One man who was walking next to Batiushka said: "I used to love the forest, but now I hate it," and he shook his fist at the forest. Soaked to the bone, having had nothing to eat or drink all day, they were forced to go for the night into a hut. The exhausted men immediately dropped to the floor and fell asleep like dead men.

But to Fr. Elias sleep did not come. In the deep night a groan burst out from his very heart: "O Lord, why hast Thou forsaken me? I served Thee faithfully; I gave my whole life to Thee. How many akathists and canons I read; how fervently I served in church. Why hast Thou forsaken me to suffer so? Oh Mother of God, O Holy Hierarch Nicholas, O Holy Father Seraphim, all the Saints of God! After all my prayers to you, why am I so tormented?"

The whole night he cried out thus unto the Lord. Then suddenly, a divine visitation, like fire, touched the soul of the sufferer with unearthly consolation, and the light of Faith mystically illumined his heart and began to burn with an unutterable, all-consuming love towards Christ, which in St. Paul's words "is not possible for a man to utter" (II Cor. 12:4). When the morning came he was a new man, born again, as if he had been "baptized with fire." And after this night he could no longer live an ordinary life. He said to Matushka: "Do not think that even if I get out I will ever serve as I did before. The old world is gone forever, and there is no return." The world to which he had been accustomed had disappeared for him forever, for a glimpse of otherworldliness had been granted to him through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos, as She had promised his Matushka, the new St. Natalie. Hence there remained for him only either to give in and become an ordinary Soviet slave-citizen, or else to die entirely to this world. The straightforwardness of his character did not allow him, under the conditions of atheist oppression, to bear 'the yoke of the priesthood.' He understood this and chose death as union with the Giver of Life—Christ our Lord!

Already at their farewell Batiushka Elias told his Matushka: "You know, now I have come to burn intensely with love for Christ. Here I have come to understand that there is ultimately nothing better, nothing more wonderful than Him. I would die for Him!" They said farewell, and again Matushka set out on the long and difficult journey home. When she arrived a telegram was waiting for her. There had been a fire in the camp club, and Fr. Elias had burned together with eleven other men. How fitting—the very name Elias means "aflame"!

After Batiushka's death, Matushka was sick for a long time, but then she undertook the writing of her memoirs. At this time she had a dream: There appeared to her, as if alive, Fr. Peter Lagov (a priest who had been shot several years before this). He told her: "Dear Matushka, you should pray to St. Sergius, St. Seraphim, and the Priest-Martyr Pamphilus. Let us pray together: Holy Father Sergius, pray to God for us! Holy Father Seraphim, pray to God for us! Holy Hieromartyr Pamphilus, pray to God for us!" Awakening, Matushka reflected that their family had always revered St. Sergius and St. Seraphim and had named their two sons after these saints; but she had not even heard of the Hieromartyr Pamphilus. Coming to church and opening the Menaion, she discovered that that very day was the commemoration of Hieromartyr Pamphilus (Feb. 16). After reading the life of this Saint she found out that St. Pamphilus was a highly educated presbyter who had an immense library and had died together with eleven other martyrs, some of whom had been burnt to death in a fire.

IV

The rest of Matushka's life was not easy. She was alone, without a husband, with a child in her arms; but still, just as before, every day she sang and directed the choir in church. After the death of Fr. Elias, Matushka went to sing in the church of St. Gregory of Neo-Caesarea, where a certain Bishop John was serving. He was quite young, not more than forty. A strict ascetic himself, he demanded from the singers a precise fulfillment of the Typicon. The long monastic services and the intense life of the parish could not be pleasing to the authorities. In 1937 during Great Lent they came for Vladika. Someone warned him in advance, and he was ready for his arrest. When the police asked him to come out for a few minutes, Vladika went up to Matushka and told her: "Dear Matushka, if I do not return in 15 minutes, begin Compline without me." Of course, he never returned.

Matushka had great reverence for the memory of Bishop John. She never let out of her hands the prayer rope which he had given her and which had become grey from constant use. It was placed in the grave with her.

The Second World War began. New misfortunes piled upon Matushka. One son was arrested, and two others were sent to the front, from which the elder one did not return. She herself suffered hunger. But she always remained the same calm Matushka, hoping in God. Once, however, she began to doubt, seeing such misfortunes coming to believers, and she asked herself whether the end of Christianity had really come to Russia. With these thoughts she lay down to sleep and saw a dream: the Mother of God said to her: "As long as the lamp is burning before the shrine of St. Sergius, the Russian Church will stand." Still Matushka continued to doubt, and she prayed: "O Mother of God, if it is really Thou, make me to see this dream a second time." The next night she again saw the same dream. In relating this Matushka unfailingly would add: "And the lamp is still burning."

The years passed. Matushka led the same kind of life as before. Always there were people around her, because after the death of Batiushka, at his request, she had taken upon herself the guidance of his spiritual children. Under the conditions when many even of the clergy became apostates from the faith, she preserved a large number of people for the Church. Immediately after the end of the war Matushka received a letter from her youngest son; he was returning from the front. All the windows had been broken in her house, and Matushka wanted to repair them before his arrival. But at least 100 roubles were needed for this and she had not even a kopeck. As always, Matushka hastened to prayer. And then, the next day there came to her a young girl who offered her 100 roubles. Of course, Matushka was thunderstruck by such a gift from a girl who was unknown to her. But the girl explained that during that night her mother, one of Fr. Elias' former parishioners who had died some time ago, had appeared to her and said: "Don't you want to give 100 roubles to Matushka Evgenia for the remembrance of my soul?" And so the Lord once again miraculously helped Matushka in her needs.

Towards the end of her life Matushka received from God an undoubted gift of clairvoyance. Once she was going to church with one of her spiritual daughters. With her usual swift walk she passed by two country boys whom she saw for the first time. Matushka, without stopping, stroked them on the head and said: "Nicholas and Sergius." Suddenly her companion decided to check on Matushka. She stopped and asked the boys their names; 'Nicholas and Sergius," was the answer.

It seemed that so many temptations and trials had already fallen to the lot of Matushka, but evidently the Lord wished to test her faith to the end, and likewise to manifest to a world gone mad the whole righteousness of His servant. At the age of 80 Matushka fell and broke her rib, and from the incorrect treatment her muscles became atrophied, and she did not get up again from her bed until she died. Thus she lay for ten years, spending her time in reading, prayer, and spiritually nourishing many. In her ninetieth year, because of careless treatment, she developed bed sores and her body became so rotten that those who bathed her could see the bones of her spine. Her suffering was immense. Her daughter-in-law (she lived with her youngest son) often mocked her and asked: "Here you gave everything for your God—both your husband and your children—and how does He repay you?" Matushka replied: "Whom the Lord loves He chastens." "And why is He chastening me because of you?" Matushka smiled and said: "That means He loves you too."

In the last years of her life Matushka undertook seriously the writing of her memoirs. She profoundly understood the whole significance of her fate and that of her close ones. She loved to recall that she had been the witness of many canonizations of saints, in particular, of St. Seraphim of Sarov and St. Hermogenes of Moscow. And she often added: "And I will die when there will be a canonization." She did not say who would be canonized, but evidently she had in mind the New Martyrs, since a month before her death she said: "And you know my Batiushka, and Vladika John, and Fr. Peter Lagov, and all of them—they are all Holy Martyrs"; and with special emphasis she repeated: "Holy Martyrs."

A few days before her death a priest was asked to come so taht she could receive Holy Communion. And after she had received Communion, suddenly this practically dead old woman, in a clear distinct voice, said: "Beloved Batiushka! May Christ save! What happiness!" The priest stood on his knees before her bed and said: "Dear Matushka, when you will be with God, remember me also, a sinner."

A few days after this Matushka died. Her children and we all stood around her and saw something we had never seen before or would see after: her face began to change and from an ordinary modest old woman, which she had seemed to be during her whole lifetime, she became an extraordinarily magnificent, splendid woman. One of her sons whispered: "Probably she has just met her Batiushka now." A minute later it was all over; her soul flew away from her body, and Matushka became like an ordinary dead person.

Matushka Evgenia lived a long and extraordinarily difficult life. She never spoke loud words, never taught anyone; but the very manner of this quiet, humble old woman was the best lesson in Christian piety for those who, in our godless times, wish to live according to the commandments of Christ. Just like St. Natalie, who outlived St. Adrian and died in peace, she also was a martyr together with her martyred Batiushka, Father Elias.

Nun Maria Erastova

There came to Abba Joseph the Abba Lot, and said to him: "Father, according to my strength I keep a modest rule of prayer and fasting and meditation and quiet, and according to my strength I purge my imagination; what more must I do?" The old man, rising, held up his hands against the sky and his fingers became like ten torches of fire, and he said, "If thou wilt, thou shalt be made wholly a flame."

Paradise of the Fathers

28

Eldress Agatha of Belo-Russia

AND HER SERVICE TO THE CATACOMB CHURCH

Commemorated Feb. 5 (†1939)

> *I have finished my course,*
> *I have kept the faith; henceforth*
> *there is laid up for me a crown.*
> II Tim. 4:7-8

I

MATUSKA AGAFYA was the name given to the slave of God, Agatha, by the true-believing Christians, who revered her for her God-pleasing ascetic life. But before undertaking the description of this, we dare to say, blessed life, we shall briefly describe the believing people who visited her.

When the frightful, bloody October Revolution occurred in our homeland, believing people immediately sensed the anti-Christian spirit of the so-called Soviet 'authority.' Many rose up in battle against this Satanic authority. But there were also those who in fact could not enter into battle against the Bolsheviks; to such ones belonged Matushka Agatha. Being about 100 years old, she spent her nights in prayer with believers, praying to God for the salvation of Russia. She did not have any other opportunity to fight against the Bolsheviks than by the word of God. Spreading this among believing people, she taught them not to submit to the Soviet authority under any circumstances, even if they had to suffer, as subsequently happened to many. Before the Revolution she was known only by probably a few people; but during the Revolution and after it, and especially in the frightful '30's, she became widely known to the residents of the nearby regions of the place where she lived.

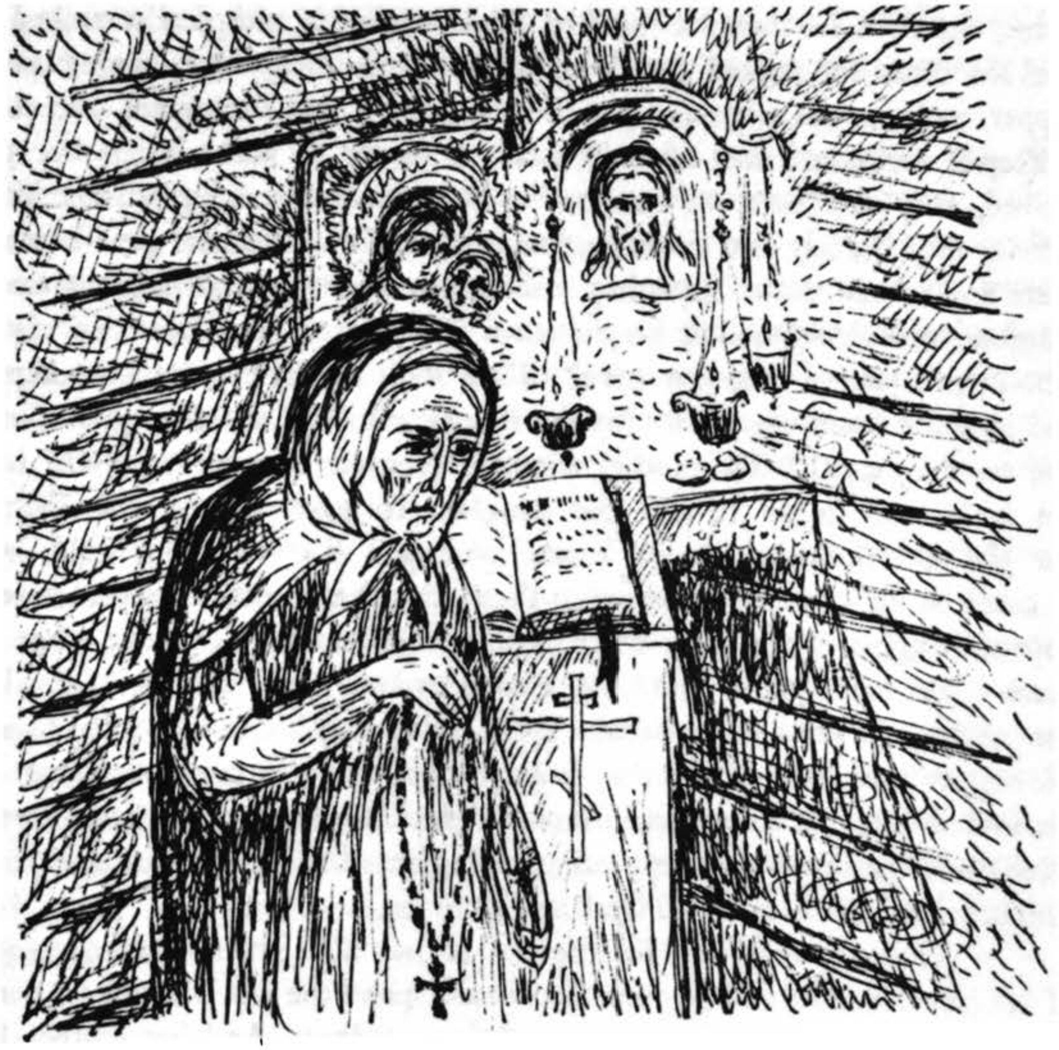
Those who had suffered the terrors of the Revolution and the persecution against the true Church, did not go to the so-called "Renovationist Church." It is characteristic that even the priests who did submit themselves to the Soviet government despised these uncompromising people, saying, "No matter what you do, eventually you will have to come to us."

At first the true priests — this is what Matushka Agatha called them, because they did not submit to the Soviet government — performed Divine Services in churches; but when the persecution was raised against them, they went out into the world and served secretly, fulfilling the necessary services for believing people. These priests established the Catacomb Church, whose places of worship were known only by the faithful. These priests would stop by Matushka Agatha's, and there often they would serve Divine services. This news was spread among the believers; thus Matushka Agatha became known to a large group of people who were devoted to the Catacomb Church. During their visitation of Matushka Agatha, her clairvoyance was revealed, which attracted yet more people who were seeking the true Church.

II

ELDRESS AGATHA was born in Sharylovka village, in the Gomel part of Minsk Province, which is in the western part of Holy Russia. She was born in the twenties of the 19th century. Her parents were simple peasants, very pious, and taught their only daughter to pray with fervency even from early childhood. When she was born she was paralyzed and could not get up nor walk. Her parents, when going early in the morning to work in the fields, would leave her at home. They would place her in a crib-like bed under a spreading pear tree in the garden, and themselves would go away for the whole day into the fields to till them, and she would remain there all the time alone in the garden; and the only thing she could do was pray. When the evening time would come, they would return and bring her to the house.

One day when she was twelve years old, the parents went far into the fields to work, and she lay quietly there in the garden, when all of a sudden a beautiful Lady appeared, just like in the icons of the Mother of God, and said, "Slave of God, Agatha get up!" "And I," Matushka Agatha later recalled, began to weep bitterly, and I said, 'I cannot get up, because from my early childhood I have been in a lying position. It is already twelve years that I cannot get up.' But the Lady said, 'Get up and go. Go into your house!'" "But how can I get up?" she said. Then the Lady took her by the hand and lifted her up, and at this moment her legs became firm, as if they had never been ailing. Then the Lady said to her, "Take your bedding, and bring it into your house. Go to the house, clean it up, put everything in order, until your parents come. Light the oven and fix supper for your parents. Go to the barn and feed the cattle.



ELDRESS AGATHA OF BELO-RUSSIA

Having done everything, go, sit up on the stove, and quietly wait for them. But when your parents will come and ask you to join them for supper, you do not come down; let them eat supper by themselves." Having said this, She became invisible. Agatha understood that this was the Mother of God Herself. Later Mother Agatha said that the Mother of God told her other things also, but she never revealed them.

Then she thanked God from the botton of her heart, and went for the first time on her strengthened legs to the house; she cleaned up the house, swept the floor. And when the cattle returned from the field — the sheep, the swine, the cows — then for the first time in her life, she gently stroked them. She led them in, milked the cows, strained the milk, and, having prepared supper, took out the ashes and put them in the pit, put the supper into the oven to keep it warm, and then sat quietly on the stove to wait. When the parents arrived, they saw that the cattle were not outside. Fearing that something was wrong, they quickly ran to the garden and looked under the pear tree — but there was no one there. Then they rushed into the house and they saw that their daughter was sitting quietly on the stove. They asked her, "Our dear daughter, who helped you up onto the stove?" Then she told her parents what happened, and how she fixed everything for the first time in her life. She concluded, "Go and eat the supper." The mother went to the oven, opened it, put the food on the table, and began to call the daughter to have supper with them. But the girl did not want to go down, and said that the Lady told her not to come down and eat supper with them. But the parents began to weep and lament, begging her to come down, so that they could see that she, after twelve years, could really walk. And now, moved by their plea, because of the love of her parents, she came down off the stove and quietly sat at the table. As soon as the supper was finished and they began to get up from the table, she suddenly discovered that her knees had become "glued together" (her legs were paralyzed) and she began to weep, remembering that she had not fulfilled the commandment of the Mother of God.

Thus she remained for the rest of her life. Then followed nine years of her constant cries and prayers. She would spend the whole night on her knees on the bed, crying both from pain and from sadness. And her mother learned to quiet her down by giving her a little piece of sugar, and then the girl would stop sobbing for a while. She was their only daughter. By the time she was 21 years old, she, thanks to God, could slowly move on her own strength, but had no control of her legs above her knees.

Moving slowly, she even walked twelve times on pilgrimage to the Kiev Caves Monastery, which was 125 miles from their village, on the tributary of the Dniepr, the river Sorozh. She already showed signs of a great ascetic and woman of prayer. She lived in the garden of her parents, in a little hut which was built for her, which consisted of one room. It looked like a log cabin. But when her parents died, she remained alone and spent her life in ascetic labors and prayers.

Mother Agatha told us that she was deemed worthy once more to see the Mother of God, but again she did not tell us how and when it took place. She had a gift of clairvoyance, and many people began to come to her as to an Eldress. They would gather at her place usually in order to pray to God: they would read the Psalter and sing Akathists. And after prayer, Mother Agatha would always give a teaching on the law of God.

After the death of her parents, she took in a little orphan boy, who helped her in her garden work and other errands. She brought him up, and he became a church reader in the village church. When she was younger, she herself used to walk to church to all the services without fail; but when she became older, people made her a little cart, and would pull this "wheelchair" and bring her to church, and she would sit in it during the service. They would come to her from long distances, in great numbers, and with love would bring her to church. When her church was turned into a "Living Church" after the Revolution, she stopped attending it.

The orphan boy was called Andrew. Later on he got married, built a house and lived with his own four little boys. And Matushka remained living in the house of her parents, which eventually burned to the ground. Then they built for her another cabin with the help of Andrew and one rich man by the name of Kirey, who lived on a Stolypin ranch. Her house was built right next to where the pear tree was growing. This Kirey also made for her a coffin, which was placed in her house. But this house also burned together with the coffin. Then they built for her another one, also with a coffin, and that one burned again. And then Andrew took her into his own house and the boys looked after her.

III

AT THE BEGINNING of the thirties, there remanied very few true priests, for many of them had been sent to concentration camps and placed in prisons. The ones who had not been exiled were in no position to satisfy the religious needs of all the faithful. There were cases when priests who submitted to the Soviet government during the Divine services demonstratively took off the church vestments from themselves, threw them down, and in hearing of the people renounced the priesthood and belief in God. These actions caused terror in the people, a part of which became atheists; but a part of them strove to find the Catacomb Church, which gave instructions and indications in the true Orthodox spirit. The propaganda of atheism likewise corrupted many people. If some of them later returned to God, it was thanks to the prayers of such people as Matushka Agatha.

The believers who were thirsting for the word of God visited Matushka Agatha, begging her advice and prayers. She gave advice to all who came to her with a pure heart, but there were cases when she did not wish to receive people, and after some time it became clear that they had fallen into some sin. People who visited her received indicaions on how to act towards the Soviet authority. She would say, "My little children" (as she would call her true Orthodox visitors), "do not submit to the Soviet authority, because it is an authority not from God. Do not go into the collective farms under any pretense. Let them take away your property and rights; but do not go to them, do not sign up for them." The registration as collective farmers, who supposedly signed up 'voluntarily' for 99 years in the collective farm, she viewed as one of the forms of the seal of antichrist (99 upside down forms two digits of the "number of the beast" in Apoc. 13:18). She said that they should avoid the census — "Hide from the census of antichrist," she said; "you will get nothing from this." Especially she recommended to avoid voting, and almost everyone who visited her avoided voting and the census.

Among her numerous visitors were many family people who had children of school age. She advised parents that their children who attended school should not enter into the groups of the "Octoberites," "Pioneers," "Young Communists," and so forth. She likewise advised that their children should not take vaccinations which were periodically given to school children. This was justified by the fact that at one time children died by being infected by the vaccinations.

Concerning the Soviet church she said, "This is not a true church. It has signed a contract to serve antichrist. Do not go to it. Do not receive any Mysteries from its servants. Do not participate in prayer with them. There will come a time when churches will be opened in Russia, and the true Orthodox faith will triumph. Then people will become baptized, as at one time they were baptized under St. Vladimir. When the churches are opened for the first time, do not go to them because these will not be true churches; but when they are opened the second time, then go — these will be the true churches.* I will not live to see this time, but many of you will live to this time. The atheist Soviet authority will vanish, and all its servants will perish." All those people to whom she spoke believe her words. Some of them are now living abroad and are awaiting the fulfillment of her prophecies, for much has already been fulfilled of what she spoke. As for what she prophecied to each one separately, all has been fulfilled.

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* After almost all churches in Russia were closed in the late 1930's, the churches were "opened for the first time" under Stalin (Churches of the Moscow Patriarchate); after many more closures since then, the churches have not yet been opened "the second time."

IV

I KNEW ELDRESS AGATHA from my youth, when I lived with my parents in the village of Diatlovka, only four miles away from Mother Agatha. But in 1914 my family moved to Minsk province, which was 25 or 30 miles from Matushka. Nevertheless we village girls would join the elderly women in making pilgrimages to her on foot. Many people visited her and she received us all with love, which evoked in us a very strong feeling of reverence, contrition of heart, and often, tears of repentance. The whole atmosphere about her produced awe and fear of God.

Her little log cabin was not a large one, but it had room for many people. There was an icon corner with many icons, and large candlestands with burning candles. There were three oil lamps burning perpetually. In front of the icon corner was an analogian with the Psalter, which was read and sung often.

In appearance, Matushka was of very short stature, all white, as if made out of wax. Her eyes were light grey, full of light, and bright. She talked very slowly, softly and in a sing-song manner, at the same time slowly walking in tiny steps about her humble dwelling. Most of the time she spent in spinning flax, making yarn with her hands, while her mouth was repeating the Jesus prayer without stop. People would bring to her their home-spun linen as gifts, but she would give them away to poor people and to priests to make cassocks. Whoever would visit her, she would always make them eat dinner or supper with her, while she herself ate little. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for her were strict fast days. She wore simple peasant clothes.

She would almost never smile, but had a gift of teaching, during which she often would make unhurried signs of the cross over herself very solemnly. Her talks were very interesting — almost all in parables, some of which were prophecies. Her gift of clairvoyance was astonishing, of which we are living witnesses. There were also cases of real miracles.

Once on the way to Matushka from Diatlovka I was walking with a group of young women, and one of them, Melania, said that Matushka was probably illiterate and could not read, since she did not go to school; yet she knows so much from the Gospels and the Bible. When we arrived and had rested for a while, Matushka, who was sitting on her couch, said to a girl who helped her: "Motia, get me a book from the chest." She got it and gave it to Matushka. The book was a large one and in Slavonic. I sat next to Matushka on her bed, which was of hard boards. She placed the book on my lap and began pointing to various passages saying: "They say that I am illiterate, and now let us read this part and this," and she began to read aloud.

Not long before her death a certain illiterate village woman, Eugenia, paid her a visit and was standing in the back. Matushka called her and asked her to read the Psalter. The confused woman was sorry to say that she could not read because she did not know how to. Then Matushka said to her, "Take, take the book! You will open the book and read it." Eugenia took the book and, to the amazement of all, began to read for the first time in her life, and as well as if she had read for years. Truly that was a miracle.

Many priests and homeless wandering catacomb clergymen used to come to Matushka, and also many monks from closed monasteries and schema-monks who lived deep in the forests. Matushka herself would tell those who visited her about them. Evidently the whole cycle of daily services was conducted in her cell, which was a solace to those deprived of churches. They flocked to her as to a true mother in Christ. Pilgrims from holy places would bring her holy bread, which she distributed among her spiritual children in little pieces as a blessing. They would also bring to her water from the Holy Land, Jerusalem and Mt. Athos and she would share it with us. She would tell us to scoop ordinary water into little buckets at midnight and bring it to her, and she then would pour into it drops of the holy water. Thus the faithful, even those who for thirty years did not go to church, always had holy water. When the Soviet agents would come for investigation and search, as they often did, they would always see bottles with holy water, and would be curious whether it were vodka; and as a rule, not believing what they were told, just to make sure, without fail they would drink some.

In 1935-7 a schema-monk, apparently from the closed Gomel Monastery, Father Eugene, of holy life, used to appear at Matushka's for spiritual counsel, and then again would disappear. He was being sought by the authorities. When the "Living Church" of the Renovationists appeared in the 1920's, Matushka advised all not to go there, not to baptize children there, and not to have weddings there. When the infamous "collectivization" came, she said that we should not go to the collective farms, and there were many of us who listened to her and did not go. At that time even more people began to visit her, and even people from the collective farms; she asked us not to let in such people. Then (late 1930's) there were no more Orthodox clergy left; all had been arrested and exiled, and most of them perished.

One of the very young girls who used to visit Matushka, Galka, came in one day as usual. Matushka, in front of everyone said that she had seen a dream in which Galka fell into a deep pit. Soon we found out that she had gone to the "Living Church" and joined the Renovationists and turned away from Matushka altogether.

Another time three elderly women came to Matushka, and one of them was from Diatlovka. Matushka said to them that she had seen a dream: that she was distributing bread to them, and that there was enough for one, but not enough for the other two. And it turned out that those two also went to the Renovationists.

Collectivization was bound up with absolutely inhuman treatment of the innocent peasantry, which was virtually liquidated. But just before that, in the year 1937, there was a good crop of wheat. We cut it down and stacked it, but it had to be dried a bit before being threshed. So we left it in the barn to dry, and some of us women decided to visit Matushka in the meantime, and bring her some flour. So we borrowed some flour from our neighbor Anastasia and set out. When we arrived at Matushka's and began to fix supper, she said: "No, my dear little children, we shall not eat pancakes." But we said, "We have brought some flour for you and will fry pancakes, for a good crop of wheat is stored up for us at home." But she repeated several times, "No, no, we shall not eat pancakes, no pancakes." When we came home we found out, to our great grief, that the Soviet chief of the "Selsoviet" (farmers' council) Blumkin, had taken all our wheat. And in order to pay back what we had borrowed from Anastasia, we had to work it out in her vegetable garden. So we truly did not eat any pancakes.

When absolutely no priests remained for hundreds of miles, and Pascha came, people turned to Matushka with a question: how and where can we have our kulichi and other paschal food blessed? She gave the following answer: "Go into the forest, and when it will be midnight, begin to sing, 'Thy Resurrection, O Christ Saviour . . .', 'Christ is Risen', and other paschal hymns, which are usually sung by the choir, and put the kulichi (sweet paschal bread) on the ground and let them stay there until dawn, and when the morning dew will descend upon them, then you shall know that they have been already blessed. The Lord Himself has blessed them!" And so the faithful people did. They would gather, several families together, and spend the paschal night in the forest, because it was already dangerous to gather in houses. Later even that was dangerous, so we would put our pots with paschal food on top of the fence for the night to be blessed by God. And God blessed them and us, through the prayers of our holy Mother Agatha.

Right after the death of my five-year-old son, Eusebius, I went to Matushka with my grief, taking a handful of earth from his little grave, because he had been buried without a priest. When I came Matushka greeted me with joy as always, for she already knew of my loss. We sang the funeral service and panikhida by ourselves and went to rest for the night. In the morning, when we got up, Matushka asked me: "Have you seen your little son?" I answered negatively. "And I, my dear one, saw him," she said. "If you only knew how happy he is there, then you would beg God that the Lord would take your other sons also." The other world was indeed close to her!

Years earlier, in 1922, once when I came to her she said to me that St. Theodosius of Chernigov had visited her and said that the Communists wanted to investigate his relics, but he had risen up and come to her. Soon it became known that his relics, after being opened by the Soviet authorities, had been stolen by someone and their whereabouts since then were unknown.*

V.

MY WIFE SAW Matushka often, but I, although I wished this very much, did not have the opportunity. Then, one day Matushka sent word that she wanted to see us both. I was afraid to go because I did not have the documents. (The Soviet local police require a special permit for any departure from one's place of residence.) And then suddenly I saw a dream: two women in white garments, glittering white hair and halos around their fair heads. I could guess that one of them was Eldress Agatha, but the other Lady I did not recognize. I could only surmise that it might be either her mother or — frightful to say — the Most Holy Mother of God Herself. When I awoke I was resolved to go and finally see Eldress Agatha, in spite of the danger. So we left and on the way everything was all right. When we arrived and entered her little house, I immediately recognized Eldress Agatha from the dream I had of her. I never learned who the other holy one was.

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* See the photograph of the opening of St. Theodosius' relics page 182.

Her dwelling consisted of a rather small one-room peasant log cabin; its walls were covered with icons and there were three icon-lamps burning; her bed was made out of a few boards put together, covered with a simple peasant mat; there were several analogions, and candlestands wtih burning candles. This is where she greeted us, sitting on her bed. There were people who looked after her. Andrew was still there.

I approached her and bowed down, as if to take her blessing, but she did not allow me to kiss her hand, and instead put it on my head, and began to kiss my head. I did not want her to do this, saying that I was a sinful man. She lifted my head and said: "Why, my dear, don't you want me to kiss your head?" Evidently she foresaw all the sufferings I would have to go through in the near future, which indeed began after 1938, when I was arrested.

We rested for a while, listened to her sweet discourse, then had supper and prayed to God together. It was good there with her, rather cozy: the heart felt touched and one wanted to weep, not from sorrow, but from 'umileniye,' that indescribable warmth from tender-feeling when the grace of God touches your heart. Putting us to bed on the floor, she asked us to lie down together under the analogion and the icons, and she herself, sitting up on her bed, prayed the Jesus Prayer throughout the whole night, calmly and regularly making the sign of the cross.

In the morning, when we got up and had prayed and had breakfast, I told her that I had a sister in Chernigov province in M. village. Then she blessed us to go and said: "Go safely, my little children, wherever you need. I shall pray to God for you." And so we travelled forty miles "illegally," saw my sister, and with God's help returned home safely. This was the last time I saw Eldress Agatha.

Eldress Agatha had many contacts with righteous men and women around our neighborhood; they themselves were real clairvoyant saints like herself. They were either her spiritual children or spiritual friends of like mind, to whom she would send our catacomb people for spiritual instruction or consolation. I liked to visit them and was at home with them, since we all had become strangers to the spirit of Antichrist that had taken hold of our once glorius and holy, but now impoverished and wretched land of Russia.

THE RIGHTEOUS WOMAN OF LOEV

In the small town of Loev on the Dniepr River there lived a holy woman who was sick for thirty years. She became paralyzed right after her marriage. For five years her husband stayed with her, but then he left her. After some time he saw that people were coming to her because she had become renowned for clairvoyance, and he returned to her. Girls and pious women looked after her; she had command only of her arms. Matushka Agatha knew her and sent people to her for guidance, for she also knew how to console a grieving heart.

In 1940 my friend Athanasius S. and I decided to go to Kiev to buy some clothes. Since the steamer to Kiev stopped at this town, we decided to go on this steamer to Kiev. But when we arrived in Loev, the Dniepr in one day began to freeze, and we were afraid to go to Kiev, lest we get stranded on the way; and so we decided to abandon the trip to Kiev, and instead to pay a visit to the clairvoyant sick woman X. But we did not know where she lived, and it had already become dark.

At this very time this holy woman ordered a meal to be made for two guests, saying that two wanderers, Tychon and Ahanasius by name, were to be coming to her. Then she told her husband to go to a certain corner on the street, where he would meet two young people who were looking for her. This man met us there and asked whether we were looking for a sick woman; and when we, in great amazement, answered "yes", he brought us to her. No sooner had we opened the door than she began singing the "psalm" (religious song) that we knew well and loved, and we, with spirits uplifted from the wonderful things that God had done, joined her in singing:

"Tomorrow, tomorrow, in the house of Zacchaeus,
A mystical Guest will abide,
And speechless and pale does Zacchaeus
Now stand before Him inside.
My body — a house dark and dim
And all in disarray and unclean;
What do I have to refresh Him?
What place for my Guest unforeseen?"

ELDRESS AGATHA

Then, after praying to God, we had supper, during which some spiritual books were read aloud. Then they gave us a place to sleep. When we left in the morning she told us not to go to Kiev, but to buy everyhing in this town and quietly return to our families.

RIGHTEOUS PARAMON, THE MARTYR

In the town of Bragil there lived a 65-year-old bachelor of chaste life. His parents died early and he remained living all alone in their house for many years, leading a life of fasting and prayer. His house was not a large one, on the outskirts of town, and a large orchard surrounded it. There were two churches in this town, and when they signed their loyalty to the Soviet Church (Metropolian Sergius), he stopped going to them and conducted the church services at home.

Once in the month of June I visited this town. I was with my other friend Athanasius (different from the above). It was Sunday morning and we were going to church. As we came closer to it, we saw that on top of the church, instead of an Orthodox cross, there was attached a hammer and sickle and a red flag. So we went to the other church, and that one had the same stamp of Antichrist on it. So we decided not to go to church at all, and instead to pay a visit to Paramon, whom we knew.

He was very happy to see us. Outwardly, he looked quite stout, of less than medium height; his head was bald and he had a medium-sized beard not yet gray. He invited us into his house, all the walls of which were thickly covered with icons; there were many icon lamps, all lit, before the holy icons. He even showed us portraits of the Tsars and the new-martyr Nicholas II. They were hidden in a large closet that had many of these old and rare portraits adorning the walls. Having examined all that he showed us, we came out into the garden. It was a luxuriant orchard, with many tall and shady trees that abounded with fruits. He somehow managed to preserve himself almost to the end from the collective farms and all the horrors and deprivaions of the hellish Soviet system, under which everything was liquidated by the Communist authority.

Here in the garden he told us of a miracle he had beheld in this very garden just over a week before. On the first of June, he suddenly saw in the air some unusually large birds, girded about with sky-blue ribbons. As he was watching them they began to hover over his garden. Suddenly he saw one of these birds come right down into his garden, and when it was almost down it asked him: "What do you see, Paramon?" Petrified, he said, "I don't know."

Then it said, "We go to the East to make way for the Eastern Kings to go West." With this it rose up to join the flock and flew to the East. In a week the war broke out, and very soon the local Soviet guerillas found out about the portraits of the Tsar in Paramon's cell and about his ascetic life, and in that very garden they tortured him for a long while and then killed him. He died a martyr's death in July, 1941.

New Martyr Paramon, pray to God for us!

SCHEMA-HIEROMONK EUGENE

Many wonderful people used to visit Matushka Agatha, secret desert-dwellers from deep forests, shema-monks, and wandering homeless catacomb clergy. One of the latter was Father Eugene, who was not native to our part of Russia. He was secretly serving in several villages. People said that he was learned, and that God revealed much to him; he gave people much useful advice.

He was tall, quite energetic, all gray-haired, and must have been 80 years old or more. He walked dressed as a priest, only sometimes he would partly hide his priestly calling by putting on some ragged village garb. When this holy Elder would appear, people would immediately know and come to him for spiritual help.

A poor village girl, by the name of Kulinka, had some kind of dangerous ailment and, trusting God more than men, wanted to do a good deed by donating beeswax for church candles. So she made a vow to give something she had, but she could find nothing but a few yards of linen towelling to bring to this holy Elder, who of course knew nothing about her vow. When she came to him, she saw many people patiently sitting and waiting in the village house where he was staying. The moment she crossed the threshold, the clairvoyant Elder turned to her and said: "Kulinka, did you bring me what you promised?" In sorrow she said that she had only the towelling, but could not get the wax. Smiling, he accepted her gift and said, "You'll get the wax some other time."

Once he stayed for two or three weeks in a village on the bank of the Dniepr, at the farmer Euthemius'. God revealed to him that the local Soviet authorities were going to deprive this poor man of all his hay, his peasant hide overcoat, his horse with bridle, and other things. So Fr. Eugene put on this coat, saying that it fit him very nicely, and that it would be good to go to visit Matushka Agatha in it. After walking around the house in it for a while he took it off and hung it back on the wall. The farmer's wife, Laksuta, began to fear that he would not give it back to her husband. Euthemius meanwhile bridled the horse in order to go to Matushka Agatha. Fr. Eugene came out and said, "Some ride we are going to have," and sitting down in the cart, pointing to a hay stack, he added, "let's sell all that hay stack and drink it! We won't need it!" But Euthemius said, "What are you saying, batushka, what are we going to live on? We will have nothing!" Then, giving a stern, sad look, the Elder said: "That's exactly how we are going to live — having nothing!" But Euthemius drove on without understanding. They visited Matushka and returned. The moment they came into the yard, the head of the "Selsoviet" arrived and took that very hide overcoat, and the hay, and the horse with the bridle. And so did all the predictions of the Elder come true. Then the poor wife bitterly regretted that they had not given the coat to Fr. Eugene.

Once my wife went with several women to see Matushka Agatha in order to hear her spiritual instructions and to pray to God together with her. Our village was 30 miles away. When they came, after the usual greetings, Matushka turned to my wife and said with concern: "My little child, hurry up and go back. It is necessary for you to be home." My wife knew well that she was clairvoyant, and therefore she hurried home at once. Hardly had she entered the house, when the NKVD agents arrived and arrested me. We had time enough only to say goodbye, thanks to Matushka Agatha.

VI

ALL THIS TIME the Soviet authorities wanted to arrest Matushka Agatha, but they were afraid, knowing that she was clairvoyant. When she lived at Andrew's place, they arrested his wife Motia (Matrona). Then one widow from the village of Mokovo, who lived with her 14-year-old daughter, took her in; and so the Soviets arrested this widow also. Then Andrew took her back, and his boys looked after her. Then they arrested Andrew with his whole family, and exiled them. After this they came twice to arrest her, but could not.

Matushka Agatha foreknew her own death more than a year ahead: she told us about it and was prepared for it. She prepared her burial dress: it was all of a bright green color. She told us that they would starve her to death. We would say that under no conditions would we allow it, but she would say, "My little children, you will not be allowed to come to me. They will place armed guards — and I'll die." And it did occur just as she said.

What she would say to the believers concerning the Soviet authorities she would say to the Communists also. She was not afraid of them and called them "godless ones — servants of Satan." When it was reported to the NKVD agents that one old lady, by the name of Agatha, was teaching the people not to be obedient to the Soviets, calling the Soviet authority godless and of Antichrist, they sent four young NKVD agents to arrest her and bring her to the city of Gomel. When they came to her house, a terrible fear seized them, so that they hesitated to touch her. One would say to the other: "You take her;" and that one would answer, "No, you take her," and then said, "I'm afraid to touch her, because she might get glued to my hands." That was because it was known that her legs were "glued together," and so she was regarded by them as a kind of witch. She was then 119 years old. And so they could do nothing about her.

Then an order came out to starve her to death. They brought armed guards, in February, 1939, and surrounded her poor dwelling and no one was allowed to come close. The guards were there all the time, day and night, and were changed regularly. It took between two and three weeks.

Believers would come and see the dear little hut on the hilltop and knew that there a Saint of God was dying helplessly, one who had helped so many people — and they could do nothing for her. The guards were free to shoot whenever they wanted.

Then came the sad cry like the funeral knell: "Go bury Agapka," for she was no more. There was no priest. The villagers buried her in the village cemetery. We were not there when they buried her, and it was dangerous to be near. We, her people, got together in the Buritskoe village 40 miles away, and the whole night without leaving the house sang the burial service and panikhida, since there was absolutely no way to get a priest. We, girls and women, divided the whole Psalter among ourselves, one Kathisma apiece, so that the reading would continue for forty days. And so we prayed to God for her in this way, not only for forty days, but for a whole year. We do not forget our dear Matushka, who saved us and fed us with spiritual food — during the time of terrible famine.

O holy Mother Agatha, pray to God for us!

Tychon and Thekla T.

29

Abbess Antonina

AND THE CAVE-DWELLERS IN THE CAUCASIAN MOUNTAINS

Commemorated March 1 (†1929)

> *Then shall they begin to say*
> *to the mountains, Fall on us;*
> *and to the hills, Cover us.*
> Luke 23:30

The following is an eye-witness account of a true member of the Catacomb Church, Natalia V. Urusova, who herself endured a bloodless martyrdom in the years since the Revolution up to the end of the Second World War. Her crime was that she was a firmly believing Christian, belonged to an aristocratic family, was a monastically oriented "Josephite", and the mother of several martyred sons.

IN THE VLADIKAVKAS, not far from the railroad station was a convent dedicated to the holy icon of the Iviron Mother of God. I used to visit this monastery every day. I became very close to many nuns, but especially to the kind-hearted Matushka, Abbess Theophania. She was not highly educated and evidently came from a peasant family, but she was a wonderful humble soul.

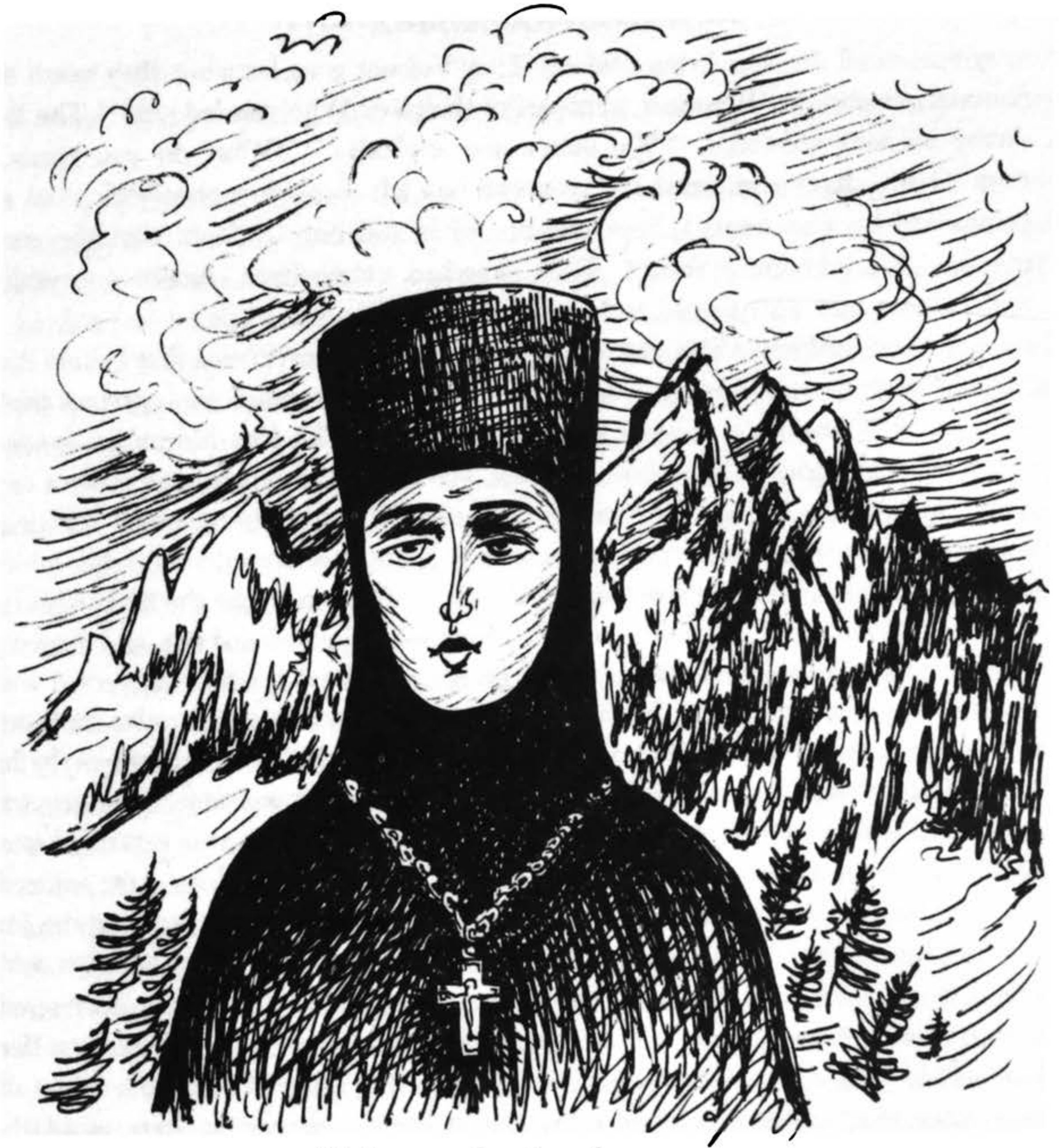
It was early in the year 1922. One day I came to her and she said to me: "I want to share with you a secret, about which no one knows save for myself, the nun who is the treasurer, and my cell-attendant [a rassaphore nun]. Come, let us go."

Abbess Theophania conducted me through several rooms, and in the last one—from which a spiral staircase led to the attic—there was sitting another abbess. I instantly understood that she was an abbess because she was wearing a gold cross. She was unusually attractive, not only in her friendliness and spiritual loveliness, but in her rare outward beauty as well. She looked very young and one could never have guessed that she was already forty. For three months, despite the freezing cold of winter, they had been hiding her in the attic and only rarely would bring her down to this room so that she could get warm. The secret was well kept. Only the cell-attendant would ascend to the attic when she brought her food and other necessities. Soon I too became very close to her for we had much in common and we became quite attached to one another. She was well educated and from a good, noble family.

It was not long before she told me her story. She was the Abbess of a women's convent in the town of Kizliar in the Caucasus. In the beginning of the Revolution, when the plundering of monasteries was a common occurrence, a crowd of Bolshevik bandits broke into their convent destroying everything, robbing, and shooting to death several nuns who resisted. When for a short time the White Army took the town of Kizliar, somebody unknown indicated to them the persons who had destroyed the monastery and killed the nuns. The murderers were shot by the Whites. When the White Army retreated and the Bolsheviks took control of the town, they began to search for the person who had told the Whites. The Abbess, totally innocent, was accused and sentenced—an act of pure revenge. However, the Lord helped her to flee and at night she walked to Vladikavkas, to this convent where Abbess Theophania hid her. All over the whole of the Caucasus there were posted proclamations and "wanted" posters: "He who will show the whereabouts of the former Abbess of Kizliar Convent, Antonina, will receive a reward of 3,000 gold rubles."

For a whole month and a half I had the good fortune of seeing Abbess Antonina almost every day. Once, on a freezing cold night, when there was an unusual amount of snow, at one o'clock at night someone knocked at my window. Everyone woke up frightened. Who would knock at night except for the GPU? I lifted the curtain and couldn't believe my eyes. I saw Abbess Antonina in a white sheep-skin coat; on either side of her stood the nun-treasurer and the cell attendant Anfisa. "Hurry up, hurry up. Open and hide Matushka." They came in. We turned off the lights so as not to attract attention and what did we hear? We heard the following incredible, obvious miracle of God.

Just a few days before this, about which I had no idea, a certain young girl came to the convent, calling herself a daughter of the noble Troubetskoy family. With tears she begged the Abbess to receive her, stating that her father and mother had been killed and their estate robbed, and she remained alone in her grief. She played the part so well that she managed to gain the confidence of the Abbess who, in the simplicity of her heart, not only accepted and was very kind to the girl, but soon even confided to her the secret of Abbess Antonina. The girl disappeared at



Abbess Antonina

once—she was an agent of the GPU looking for Matushka Antonina. That same night the convent was surrounded by militia so that no one could escape. They broke in to search, demanding that the abbess be surrendered. When the cell-attendant ran upstairs to inform Abbess Antonina about this, she said: "Well, what can we do? If it is pleasing to the Lord that they find me, let it be so. But if it is not His will, He will close people's eyes, and they, seeing will not see. Come, we shall go out in front of them." The nuns put the sheep-skin coat on her and the three of them went down the stairs and simply walked out of the convent gate before the very eyes of all the Red Army soldiers. They had not gone far when they heard the commander shout, "Who just went out of the gate? Who was led out?" The Red Army soldiers answered, "We didn't see anybody." "What do you mean," retorted the angry commander, "someone just left in a white sheep-skin coat accompanied by two nuns." Everyone denied it and only thought that the commander was imagining things. They searched everywhere, turned everything upside-down and were forced to leave empty-handed. A miracle!

And so she was brought to me. I, of course, was overjoyed that I could hide her, alhtough even in our place it was very risky for her, since we ourselves could be arrested at any time. I asked the nuns: "What shall I feed Matushka, for our meals are very poor?" The nuns answered, "We shall bring her meals twice a day, lunch and dinner." They sat with us until morning. Abbess Antonina remained with us and they returned to the monastery. Soon they brought the food, which they continued to do twice a day in the course of the two weeks she lived with us.

No one could help but love her. The children just adored her, and even my husband, usually indifferent to so many things, respected her and conversed with her with unfeigned pleasure. In those days it was still possible to acquire for a certain sum a secret shelter in the mountains from the local hill-folk, known as the Ingush. The convent wanted to do that, but such an enormous sum of money was demanded that even if all the possessions of the convent—what little remained after the Bolshevik plunder—could have been sold, even then it would not have sufficed. We decided that she would stay with us and did not make any plans for the immediate future, leaving her in God's hands, as we had all come to love her very much. She, however, suffered terribly at the thought that if she were discovered, then not only she would pay severely for it, but we also would be forced to suffer. Her whole case, of course, was a miracle and sheer Providence of God. After all, ever since that night of searching for her in the monastery, in spite of all the hideous designs of the GPU investigations, no one had detected where and why the nuns walked twice a day carrying hot dinners.

Two weeks went by. Meanwhile I put up a gauze curtain separating a place in a corner for her in the only room, where there were already five children. There was a bed for her and a hanging lampada brought from the monastery which was always burning. Once I noticed that Matushka spent the whole night kneeling and fervently praying with tears. I could see through the thin curtain and I couldn't sleep; I could not help but be affected by her sorrow. Early in the morning she turned to me and said,

ABBESS ANTONINA

''Please do me a favor. Go to the Blessed Anastasia Andreyevna and, without saying anything else, tell her: Matushka Antonina is asking for your blessing.''

Anastasia Andreyevna, a righteous fool-for-Christ's-sake, well known throughout all of the Vladikavkas region for her gift of clairvoyance, lived in a small hut located in the back yard of a good Christian. I went to her. She asked me what I needed and I told her that Matushka Antonina asked for her blessing.

''Yes, yes!'' she answered. ''Tell her that she should fear nothing; what she has decided and prayed about she should fulfill; yes, she should fulfill. She should go to the large red government house; yes, she should go!''

I told Abbess Antonina her answer and her face lit up...

''I decided to give myself up to the GPU today. I suffer terribly because you will have to answer for me, and even though I prayed, I still had fears and doubts about going through with this. But now, after the words of the blessed one, nothing and nobody can stop me.''

The children and I burst into tears. What could we hope for? The GPU—why, this was an unutterable horror! She left, having parted with us in tears, but with an amazingly tranquil face which became even more glowing and more beautiful than before. She was in her monastic garb and wearing the gold cross of an abbess. In spite of all the hindrances and dangers, she never took off her monastic attire. A little more than an hour passed. We all sat in silence, given over to grief and the thought of her fate. All of a sudden my eleven year old daughter, looking out the window, cried out: ''Matushka Antonina is coming!'' She came in full of such extraordinary joy that it is impossible to describe. And this is what she told us:

''I came to the house of the GPU. The guard on duty asked why I had come. I answered that I would tell and give my name only to the chief. Others joined, demanding subordination to the rules and regulations and that I should register. I said, 'Tell the chief that I wish to see him and will not subordinate myself to anybody else.' They went and reported this to him. He ordered them to inform me that no one was allowed to violate the rules of admission. I again insisted that I would talk only to him. At this time the door opened into the corridor and the chief himself peered out. Seeing me he said, 'Come in.' So I entered. 'What do you want?' 'You are offering 3,000 rubles for my head. Well, I brought it to you myself.' He was so dumbfounded that he got up and said, 'You, you are Abbess Antonina, and you came to us yourself?!!' I said yes, and that I had brought my own head. He took out my photograph from his desk. I took from my pocket one just like it. He looked at me and said, 'You are free, Go wherever you want'! As I was leaving he said, 'In a year's time, according to the law, I will be obliged to give you some punishment'...

No one investigated where she went after leaving the GPU and no one touched us. She settled openly in the convent where she lived peacefully for another year. Later I learned that she was ordered to work for a year as a maid in a communist hotel in the city of Rostov-on-the-Don. But even then she did not take off her monastic attire. Not a single communist, however, would demand service from her; all dealt with her without malice or insults; all paid her the utmost respect and would even slightly bow to her. In 1923 such things could still occur.

Some twelve years later, when I was in Kazakhstan in the city of Akhtyubinsk where I lived with my son who was exiled there, I met Archimandrite Arsenius who was also exiled there. He was a close friend of Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and through him I had the pleasure of meeting that holy hierarch. I found out that Father Arsenius knew well Abbess Antonina and he told me the following about her:

When her time of sentence was over, a group of twelve nuns formed a monastic community under her direction and went to the town of Tuapse with the aim of founding a secret skete high up in the mountains. In those days many monks from the ruthlessly destroyed monasteries hoped to settle in the mountains as hermits to avoid persecution from the Bolsheviks. But the minds of the GPU were sly; they placed their secret agents disguised as forest rangers all over the mountains, and one by one they discovered all the secret sketes and dwellings of these hermits—almost all of whom were shot on the spot.

When Abbess Antonina climbed up to the top of one high mountain, she met a monk from the skete where Father Arsenius was living. In that wind-swept, craggy wasteland, way up high and far removed from the world, she discovered a whole monastic settlement with caves and churches and enough provisions to live and serve God daily for some time. The monks there offered to help and at once set about digging out caves beneath the roots of huge trees, which became dwellings for the nuns. The monks lived in similar dwellings. They likewise constructed a church there and with joy helped the nuns in their needs. But this hidden community was not to last long.

Soon both sketes were discovered. Out of fourteen monks, only one, Father Arsenius who was the youngest, was spared and not shot as were the others; he was exiled for eight years to a concentration camp far away in outermost Siberia, and upon completion of these eight years, he was sent to a settlement in Alma Ata. At this time Abbess Antonina was also arrested with all her nuns. She was not shot on the spot but exiled to an unknown place.

And this is all that Natalia V. Urusova tells about this holy abbess in her manuscript memoires. However, Protopresbyter Michael Polsky, publishing this material in his seconed volume of *The New Martyrs of Russia* (p. 248), adds to her story from his own experiences in the south of Russia (Vol. III, in manuscript, quoted below), giving a broader picture of the suffering Christians in the Caucasus and shedding light on the lives of martyrs hitherto unknown.

"In 1928, or in early 1929, a group of monk-ascetics was discovered in the Caucasus and executed by shooting. They were adherents to the teaching known as 'Name-worshippers,' originally expelled from Mt. Athos to the Crimea in about 1912. Their leader was Paul Dometich Grigorovich, a noble Kievan landowner who, after 20 years of monasticism, was drafted into the army where he held a high rank during the First World War. After the Revolution he returned to the Caucasus and was known as Father Panteleimon. The compiler of this book personally knew him as well as other 'name-worshippers' because in 1918, during the Civil War and the White Army movement in Kuban, a group of Orthodox missionaries conducted several conferences with the adherents of this teaching with the aim of bringing them back to unity with the Orthodox Church. They hoped to accomplish this by conducting doctrinal debates concerning the Name of God. I was one of these missionaries. A whole list of dogmatic resolutions was developed and signed by both sides. The former name-worshipping monk Methodius was lawfully ordained hieromonk for those who rejected the heresy, and sent to them into the mountains. But unfortunately a disagreement soon sprang up among them. Father Methodius remained loyal to Orthodoxy and left the mountains. On his way back, at one of the railroad stations, he was shot by the Bolsheviks. In ten years' time the rest of the desert-dwellers were also shot. They were described by the Bolshevik press as a dangerous, counter-revolutionary organization. In 1930 the writer of these lives himself wished to remain in Russia and live in the Caucasus, but having met the desert-dwellers and having learned more about their situation, he became convinced that to remain there would be impossible: all were kept under secret surveillance by the near-by village authorities." It is true that some went deep into the impenetrable thickets of the mountainous heights and for a long time no one knew their whereabouts. But the story of Abbess Antonina shows how an end was put even to these last desert-dwelling ascetics of the Caucasus.

MARTYRS OF NEW ATHOS

It must be mentioned that the greatest monastic attraction in this southern region was the famous monastery of St. Simon Canaanite the Apostle, better known as New Athos. In 1928 whatever remained of that veritable lavra of several hundred austere monks was destroyed. In the relatively short time of its existence, since the end of the 19th century, the monastery had acquired great renown and possessions; it was very well established and was an example to other monasteries throughout the whole Orthodox world. That year all the monastery property was stolen, everything was destroyed, and finally a group of 140 monks, who had managed to escape the first arrests by hiding in the mountains, was caught and taken to the Novocherkask prison on the Black Sea. The monks were interrogated, and upon their refusal to make a statement accepting the Soviet authority as beneficial to humanity, they were separated into groups and led to the torture chambers in the cellar of the NKVD building. There they were severely beaten and tortured. At night they were taken to a place in the Kosa region, seven miles outside the city of Novocherkask. They were lined up against a wall and shot. That wall was well known to all the inhabitants of the city.

All Orthodox Christians should remember these valiant servants of Christ who remained true to Him even unto a martyr's death.

HOLY DESERT-DWELLER MACARIUS

During the persecution of the Church and its clergy, in 1923 there came to the Caucasus a holy recluse. He appeared in the territory of Vladikavkas, in a deserted place 20 miles from a small railroad station by the name of Podgorny. He was from Central Russia but no one knows exactly where.

The territory where he chose to dwell was the foothills of the Caucasus. In a deep forest of gorges and cliffs, he dug a cave for himself where he lived and also had a small church. The altar table was hewn out of rock and there were a number of icons. It was all very poor and yet everything necessary for Divine Services was there. The recluse, Elder Makary, conducted services in this church. When the local people found out about him, they began to flock to him. There they would receive confession and Holy Communion, and the elder would also provide for their other spiritual needs. The number of his visitors constantly increased; within a short time he was receiving pilgrims almost every day.

ABBESS ANTONINA

Elder Makary was 65 years old, a genuine ascetic whom God glorified in answering his prayers and granting him the gift of clairvoyance: he would tell people their secret thoughts and deeds. The elder would always meet his visitors about two miles away from his cave and would then conduct them to his dwelling. No one forewarned him about their coming—he would discern it in his spirit. True pilgrimages began to take place, people coming from the vicinity of Kuban and local towns. The believers found there spiritual repose and they felt that they were cared for. After all, there were almost no churches left in the entire area and people were as sheep seeking shepherds.

Father Makary lived in seclusion until 1928. In this frightful year the Bolsheviks decided to put an end to his church. They had known about it for some time but for some reason had never reached it. At last they came and arrested the holy recluse. They wanted to take him away secretly, but the believers found out about his arrest and rushed to see him for the last time. As Father Makary was walking away under guard, he blessed the people on all sides and bid them his final farewell. This holy pastor of the persecuted Catacomb Church was finally martyred in the far north.

GOD-HIDDEN SAINTS

After the Second World War, there circulated in Russian emigre circles a brochure entitled, "Why I Also Believe in God." In it, the author, originally an atheist pilot, describes how he was commissioned to track down a group of monks and priests hiding way up high in the Caucasus. It must have been as late as the outbreak of the war. One day he spotted a ragged group of them on a high plateau. Upon seeing the plane, they began to run. The pilot clearly saw how they, apparently fleeing in the direction of their hiding place, were actually heading towards a wide chasm which separated them from the rest of that mountainous plateau. When they reached the abyss, they made the sign of the cross and, to the pilot's utter astonishment, they continued running in the air(!) until, having safely reached the other side, they disappeared from sight into the rocky cliffs. The dumbfounded pilot was instantly converted and came to believe in God Who had hidden his faithful slaves from the eyes of evil men but had allowed him to be a witness of this great miracle of Russia's Catacomb Saints for the salvation of his soul.

Sources: Polsky, *The New Martyrs of Russia,* Jordanville, NY, 1957, pp. 244-249 and Vol. III, manuscript; N. Urusova, manuscript.

30

The Sixty Priest-Martyrs

SLAIN IN THE TAIGA OF KACHUG-NIZHNE-UDINSK

Commemorated July 22 (†1933)

Everyone, therefore, who will confess
Me before men, him will I also confess
before My Father Who is in heaven.
Matt. 10:32

IN 1930, 1931, AND 1932 I travelled through the whole of Siberia on a scientific expedition -- writes a witness -- and in 1933 our travels took us to Irkutsk, Nizhne-udinsk, and Balagansk.

The city of Kachug is on the bank of the Lena River, 140 miles from Irkutsk. There was a road from Kachug to Nizhne-udinsk and Balagansk. The road was completely in the taiga; there were no inhabitants, and only prisoners worked on the construction. In the camps around Kachug at that time there reigned an unheard-of tyranny. For no reason at all people were shot, beaten, flogged. Living conditions were terrible; there were sixty to eighty people in a barracks, with two tiers of boards for sleeping. In case one of the prisoners didn't fulfill his daily assignment, the camp guards had the right to do what they wanted with him; they held prisoners on trial for a week in the open air. People were dying of hunger and cold.

From Irkutsk to Nizhne-udinsk we travelled by the steamship *Buryat*. From Nizhne-udinsk we travelled by horse-cart along the Kachug road, going over seventy miles from the right bank of the Ager River in the direction of Kachug. During this time I was working as hydrometer observer.

SIXTY PRIEST—MARTYRS

From the 8th to the 22nd of July, 1933, our exploration party stopped for several days not far from a concentration camp. In that region the soil was better suited to agriculture, and there were already plans for a State collective farm there. The weather had become quite pleasant. After dinner we sat until late at night by the bonfire. We often heard some kind of cries, which echoed through the taiga. We didn't know yet what kind of cries these were.

It was a clear, quiet night; the fresh Siberian air was giving off a fragrant aroma of taiga flowers along the valley. And as long as I live I will never forget this valley, I will remember it always! Our sweet morning sleep was interrupted by a kind of mournful human moan. We all got up quickly. The head of our party, a native of Irkutsk, quickly took up a pair of binoculars, others set up two levelling-instruments, and we were looking after our work, when we began to observe a crowd moving in our direction; because of the undergrowth it was difficult to understand what was going on.

It was sixty prisoners, and as they got closer we could see clearly that they were all wasted from starvation and overwork. What did we see? Each of them had a rope on his shoulders. They were dragging a sleigh -- a sleigh in the month of July! And on the sleigh was a barrel with human excrement!

The guards who accompanied them apparently did not know that there was a scientific expedition on the territory of the concentration camp. We heard the precise words of the guards' command: "Lie down and don't move." One of the guards ran back to the camp; apparently they considered us suspicious. One of our party somehow quickly determined the situation of the prisoners and said: "We've prolonged their lives a few minutes." At first we didn't understand these words. In perhaps 15 or 20 minutes we were surrounded by a platoon of camp guards, who approached holding rifles battle-ready, as if they were about to attack with bayonets. The platoon commander and the political commissar came up to us and asked for our documents. After verifying the documents they explained to us that these sixty men had been sentenced to be shot as an element foreign to the Soviet power.

Already a ditch had been prepared for these sixty. The political commissar asked us to go into our tents, which we did. The sixty martyrs were priests. In the quiet July morning the weak voices of many of the priests were clearly audible. One of the executioners asked the priests standing by the ditch, one by one: "You're taking your last breath; tell us, is there a God or not?" The reply of the holy martyrs was firm and confident: "Yes, there is a God!"

The first shot rang out. Sitting in the tents, our hearts pounded. ... A second shot rang out, a third, and more. The priests were led up, one by one, to the ditch; the executioners standing by the ditch asked each priest—Is there a God? The answer was the same: Yes, there is a God! We are living witnesses, we saw with our own eyes and heard with our own ears how people before death confessed their faith in God.

Perhaps years will yet pass, decades, but this grave on the Kachug-Nizhne-udinsk road must be found. No Orthodox Christian anywhere must forget these holy martyrs, who gave their lives for their faith.

Archpriest Michael Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs*, Jordanville, N.Y., vol. II, pp. 214-6.

31

Gregory the Cross Bearer

THE NEW MARTYRS' FORETASTE OF PARADISE

Commemorated November 6 *(†1936?)*

> *And the elders said to me, these are they that came out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple.*
>
> Rev. 7:14-15

IN THE TEMNIKOV labor camps I was appointed to a lumber cutting crew. Our job was to cut down that forest which became known throughout the world because of its desert-dweller, St. Seraphim of Sarov. It must have been in 1934. At one time my partner with whom I sawed was a Cossack from the Kuban region, who appeared to be about my height, but a strong husky man. He looked healthy although as all of us prisoners he had a pale face. I was a little afraid to have such a partner. Having a weak heart I was afraid that I would not be able to keep up with him and that I would hear from him statements to hurry up with curse words and insults. But when I took hold of the saw I heard him say:

"Brother, let us not hurry, but let us work at an even pace."

"Why is that?" I asked. "Are you not well? What is your category?"

"My category is the first, all right. I am well. Who needs our work? Only the devil needs it. We are all made to work for him."

Pleasantly surprised I said, "Let's work a little and then you'll explain to me how it is that we work for the devil."

I crossed myself. My partner did the same, saying:

"Hey, that is good that you are praying. God will protect us from trouble but even so He will not allow us to fulfill our work quota."

We felled a tree and as we began to cut it into pieces Gregory—for such was his name—began to talk:

''The Soviet government wants to build communism without God, in order to boast later and blaspheme the name of God. He who helps the atheists in this construction takes part in the war against God; he blasphemes God together with them. But we are Christians; we must be soldiers of Christ. God allowed us to fall into Satan's captivity. Now we are his captives. But we must not serve him and help him in the war against God. To work for communists is sin—an unforgivable sin.

The philosophy of the young Cossack touched me to the depth of my soul, unto tears. After three days of our common work, he refused to work altogether. They put him in solitary confinement and then, together with other prisoners who likewise refused to work, he was sent to another camp, and so I lost track of him.

A year passed by while I was in the Altai region in Osinavka. One warm spring evening soon after Pascha, while returning from work to our barracks, we heard in the compound many voices singing loudly. They were singing ''Christ is risen from the dead.'' I did not go into my barracks but, like the rest of the prisoners, was drawn to the singing. Behind the last club barracks there was a barbed wire enclosure and in it was a crowd of about 150 prisoners who looked quite different from us. These were the ''cross-bearers''. They were dressed in civilian clothes, but all their heads were shaven. On their chests or on their left sleeve there was sewn a white cross of equal dimensions. They were of various ages from 20-60 years old. They were thin, emaciated and looked like bare skeletons. But their pale faces shone with happiness. There were only men in this group; woman were concentrated in another camp.

When I had made my way through the crowd to the barbed-wire fence, one of them ran towards me. In his gaunt, pale face I recognized my old Cossack friend Gregory. Through the barbed wire we managed to give each other the Paschal kiss. Like all of these ''cross-bearers'' he was exceedingly thin and worn out, but his inspired face literally shone with unearthly beauty. Hurriedly he told me news about himself.

''Batiushka, I followed your advice and quit smoking; since the Temnikov camps I have no more desire for it. There, thanks to the solitary confinement, I was inspired to join this group of Christ's warriors—these ''cross-bearers''. The camp authorities try to force us to work, they plead with us, but we refuse. We spend time in praying, singing, and reading—we are preparing ourselves for death... They take away from us our books but the free camp workers give them back to us. God feeds us. The authorities give us 200-300 grams of bread a day and a little bit of hot water—"soup". The people who work in the camps give us a little additional bread, gruel and other food. We are constantly transferred from one camp to another and everywhere they try to talk us into working. While travelling in cars, we feel the hunger more severely; for that purpose they deliberately keep us longer on wheels.

"Since Temnikov I was both in Solovki and Vyshera and the Urals and the Kotlos and the taiga of Tomsk... Now they have brought us here, but here too they will keep us only for a few days. Here there are also "cross-bearers". They will join us and then we will be taken all the way up to the Obdorsk wilderness where they send all the religious people who refuse to cooperate with the Soviet regime. There they throw them out into the wilderness. The hunger, the cold, the scurvy—all help the Bolsheviks to kill off their victims. But there, far from the world and closer to God, one is truly free to work upon his salvation. And God strengthens His true slaves with wondrous visions and sights. There, they say, light from paradise shines... Join us, Father. Come with us to earn a martyr's crown. Among us there are two priests, they say from Tver, and laymen from Voronezh and of course from other places."

With great emotion and unspeakable joy, I listened to what Gregory was saying. My whole being was burning with sympathy and compassion and awesome reverence before this holy movement of spiritual heroes who "endured sufferings as good soldiers of Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 2:3). However, I was not vouchsafed to take part in their heroic exploit: I could not free myself from the influence of my calculating mind..

Very soon this barbed wire enclosure near the club barracks was surrounded by armed guards and access to these "cross-bearers" was forbidden. Nevertheless, we continued to hear their Paschal singing for three more days. Then they disappeared. I heard that they had indeed been sent to the Obdorsk taiga, to the desert tundra, to the shore of the Arctic Ocean—from where there is no return.

Archpriest Nicholas Masich

Sources: Protopresbyter Nicholas Masich, *Word of the Church,* Australian church periodical, No. 11, 1979; also his letters to the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood not long before his death.

IV

Sergianism as seen from within the Moscow Patriarchate

Woe unto the shepherds that destroy
and scatter the sheep of My pasture,
saith the Lord God.
Jeremiah 23:1

32

THE AWAKENING OF CONSCIENCE IN

The Moscow Patriarchate

ALL THE DIRE consequences that the early hierarchs of the Catacomb Church predicted would result from the Sergianist "Declaration" of 1927 did indeed come to pass. The Soviet government used the "Declaration" first of all as a means of persecuting the Catacomb Church in a "legal" way; but the "legalization" brought no benefit to the Sergianist hierarchs either: almost all of them were persecuted also, and by the end of the 1930's the Russian Orthodox Church had been virtually liquidated as a visible body, only a very few churches remaining open. The reopening of churches during the Second World War was inspired not by Metropolitan Sergius, but by the invasion of Hitler, to combat which required an appeal to the religious and patriotic feelings of the Russian people.

After the Second World War the Moscow Patriarchate appeared on the international religious scene as just the kind of organization the Catacomb hierarchs had foreseen: as a propaganda mouthpiece for the Soviet government, not hesitating at the baldest lies to justify Soviet tyranny. According to representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate, repeating shamelessly right up to the present day, there is not now and never has been any persecution of religion under the Soviet government; any clergy who have suffered from the authorities are only "political criminals"; churches are closed only because the people desire this.

SERGIANISM

The Christian conscience, however, cannot for long accept such lies in the name of Christianity. And so it is that in the two decades, men of conscience within the Moscow Patriarchate itself (there being no other visible Orthodox church organization in Russia) have begun to speak out, at first in the form of protests against the new persecutions of the Khrushchev period (1959-64)—in which the Moscow hierarchs were at best passive spectators and at worst willing collaborators—and then in the form of profound criticisms of the whole Sergianist policy which the Patriarchate has followed since the time of the "Declaration" of 1927.

Here we present three of the critics of Sergianism from within the Patriarchate. These are not representatives of the Catacomb Church, and one may criticize their views as not offering the pure Catacomb position of separation from the Sergianist church organization. Still, their criticisms offer a remarkable confirmation of the truth of the Catacomb position, and they give us reason for hope that in the end—at least with the fall of the Soviet regime—the best part of the Moscow Patriarchate wil be restored to unity with the Catacomb Church precisely on the basis of uncompromising Christian principle.

33

Boris Talantov

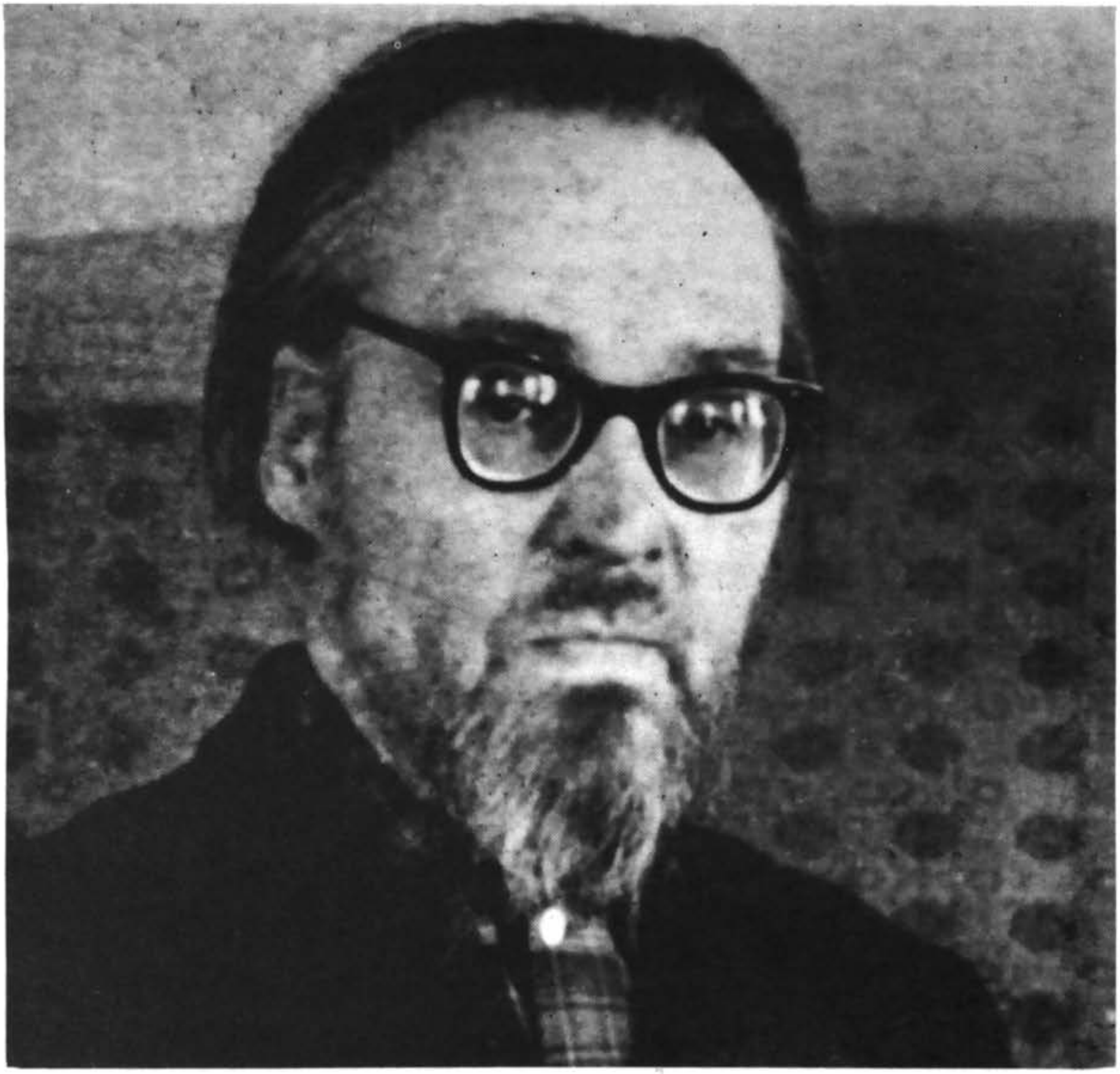
1903 - 1971

ORTHODOX CONFESSOR IN AN ATHEIST SOCIETY

ON JANUARY FOURTH, 1971, in a prison hospital in the city of Kirov (formerly Vyatka), Boris Vladimirovich Talantov died, in his 68th year, of heart disease. In the Soviet system he died in disgrace, as a political criminal, having been in prison since September, 1969, for writing a series of extremely outspoken and detailed accounts of the persecution of the Orthodox faithful by the atheist regime and by the leading hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate—a "crime" known in the Soviet Union as "anti-Soviet activities."

The life of Boris Talantov is a "typical" Christian biography of Soviet times, culminating, in his last years , in an untypical boldness in speaking the truth concerning the religious situation in the USSR. He is an example of the shocking truth of the statement made by the writer Anatoly Kuznetsov, who escaped from the Soviet Union and came to the West in 1968: "It is impossible to be a Soviet citizen and at the same time a 100 per cent decent human being." Boris Talantov was an honest man who kept the Orthodox faith to the end and his Christian conscience clean; and therefore there was simply no place for him in the Soviet system — except prison.

The chief events of his own biography were described by Talantov himself in his "Complaint to the Attorney General of the Soviet Union" of April 26, 1968 (English text in *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas*, August 15|31, 1968). The quotes that follow are from this document, in the words of Talantov himself.



BORIS TALANTOV

Boris Talantov was born in 1903 in the province of Kostroma, in the family of a priest. In 1922-23 he attended the Mezhov Institute in Moscow. "My close relatives and I suffered greatly from the lawlessness and arbitrary rule of the state security agencies during the Stalin period. My father was condemned by a *troika* (a committee of three secret police officials who sentenced their victims without hearing or appeal) in 1937 at the age of 62, and in spite of his age and illness was placed in the Temnikovskiye camps (Sarov Monastery), where the writer Yu. M. Daniel is now located. On February 5, 1940, I submitted a petition to the attorney general of the RSFSR for his early release from imprisonment on the grounds of illness. After prolonged red tape, the attorney general's office informed me only on December 19, 1940 that my father had died in the camps on March 12, 1940. The sole reason for his arrest and conviction was that he was a clergyman. My brother Seraphim Vladimirovich Talantov, working as a hydraulic technician in 1930, at the age of 22 in the city of Vologda, was arrested and convicted without any cause. He perished in concentration camps on the White Sea-Baltic Canal. I myself from 1930 to 1941, due to my origin, was continually subjected to threats from the state security agencies. In 1954 I was expelled from the Pedagogical Institute for religious convictions, though the cause was officially entered as invalid status. Working without reproach, as the documents can show, for my whole life each day I expected that I would be arrested without cause—'to rot in prison,' or would be fired from my job with 'blacklisting.' Therefore, I held it my duty to write the newspaper *Pravda* a letter of protest against the tyranny and lawlessness of the state serurity agencies" (pp. 126-7).

This letter, the first of many documents to arouse the ire of Soviet officials against the author, was sent by Talantov anonymously on July 18, 1957. "I do not know whether this letter reached the editor of the newspaper *Pravda*, but ultimately it reached the Kirov KGB (state security-political police, formerly GPU) Headquarters. The latter, by studying the handwriting, established that the author of the letter was me. On July 29, 1958, I was summoned to the KGB Headquarters, where in writing I confirmed my authorship and expressed the regret that due to faint-heartedness I had not signed the letter. On August 14, 1958, I was fired from my job at the Kirov... Polytechnic Institute 'on my own wishes' " (p. 127).

Far from being intimidated by such pressure, Talantov wrote several other letters, now openly under his own name, which he describes as follows:

"I. A letter to the magazine *Science and Religion* containing a refutation of one lie of antireligious propaganda. It was sent on October 31, 1960, and has essentially gone unanswered.

"II. A letter to the newspaper *Izvestiya*, "Mass Destruction of Monuments of Church Architecture in the Kirov Area," sent February 19, 1963. The editor of the newspaper sent me nothing in response to this letter, but a Moscow lecturer in the summer of 1963, evidently on assignment of the editor, at a meeting in the city of Kirov recommended that I be subjected to forced treatment for my seditious letter, that is, placement in a mental hospital.

"III. A letter to the newspaper *Izvestiya*, "The Soviet State and the Christian Religion," received by the newspaper's editor on December 19, 1966" (p. 127).

This last letter was an amplification of an Open Letter to Patriarch Alexy written by Talantov and signed by twelve believers of the Kirov region. "The letter contained mainly a description of unconscionable actions of the local Bishop John aimed at setting church life in disarray. Therefore, the believers requested the Patriarch to remove Bishop John immediately. Among other matters, the letter noted that local civil authorities have, from 1960 to 1964, illegally and forcibly closed 40 churches in the Kirov area (53%), had the icons and iconostases in these churches set afire, plundered the church valuables, and had a number of churches completely destroyed without any necessity for so doing" (p. 123).

" The 'Open Letter of Kirov Believers to Patriarch Alexy' was sent abroad by some method unknown to us and on December 8, 1966, the BBC radio released its content.

"On February 14, 1967, I was summoned to the Kirov Headquarters of the KGB in regard to these letters. At this point it was proposed to me that I officially repudiate my signature on the 'Open Letter of Kirov Believers' which had become well known abroad. In a written explanation I pointed out that, as an author of the 'Open Letter' and of a letter sent to the editor of the newspaper *Izvestiya*, I confirm the genuineness of my signature to the 'Open Letter' and express my readiness to stand firm on the accuracy of what both letters contain... On the very same day a KGB official removed from my apartment my working files consisting of outlines of various philosophical works with my commentary...

"Later, on February 25, I learned from a BBC broadcast that at the same time that I was confirming in the Kirov KGB Headquarters the genuineness of my signature to the 'Open Letter of Kirov Believers,' in London Metropolitan Nikodim had declared this letter to be anonymous and therefore not worthy of any credibility. He made clear his readiness to swear to the truth of his statement on the Cross and the Scriptures... This assertion of Metropolitan Nikodim greatly distressed me, as an Orthodox Christian, since from previous correspondence with the Moscow Patriarchate I was convinced that Metropolitan Nikodim could not be in doubt of the authenticity of the 'Open Letter.' Therefore, on March 22 I sent to Patriarch Alexy a letter in which I refuted the assertion of Metropolitan Nikodim about the anonymity of the 'Open Letter of Kirov Believers' and confirmed the credibility of its contents.

"In addition to myself, the 'Open Letter' was signed by seven more citizens of the city of Kirov. Early in April, they were individually summoned to the Kirov City Council in regard to this matter. Here, inquiries were made by the secretary of the City Council, L. Ostanina, who labelled me 'a dangerous individual with foreign connections,' and threatened prison for anyone who signed any further letters of this kind. In spite of the threats, all confirmed that they had signed the 'Open Letter' voluntarily and fully conscious of what they were doing....

"At the same time KGB officials bullied several believers who were petitioning to open a second church in the city of Kirov, accusing them of having ties with me, calling me 'a dangerous political criminal.' Finally, one lecturer at the Polytechnic Institute, where I had worked in 1955-58 as an instructor in higher mathematics, publicly called me 'an enemy of the people,' as was common in the time of Yezhov (Stalin's chief of secret police at the height of the worst 'purges' of the late 1930s)" (pp. 124, 125).

Another result of these letters of Talantov was an article published in the Soviet newspaper *Kirov Pravda* on May 31, 1967, "which contained slanderous assertions, gross threats, and unwarranted insults aimed in my direction," and which contained quotes from the personal archive of Talantov which the KGB had seized on February 14, 1967 — thus showing the close working relation between the Soviet press and the political police in the persecution of believers. The tragic outcome was that "my wife, Nina Agafangelovna Talantova, suffering from hypertension, was unable to bear up under the threats and slanderous charges of the article, consistent in the style of the intimidating articles against the pseudo-enemies of the people of the Yezhov period. On September 7, 1967, as the result of the traumatic experiences, she suffered a heart attack and died on September 16, 1967.

"On the day of her death, I wished to have the rite of unction performed for her, as she desired. But the Dean of the sole remaining open Orthodox church in the city of Kirov, that of St. Seraphim, told me that the local authorities forbade the rite of unction to be performed in homes. This deplorable case demonstrates that believing Christians in the city of Kirov are deprived nowadays even of those rights that they were given by J. V. Stalin" (p. 135). Talantov himself was seriously ill at this time.

SERGIANISM

In a recent collection of documents detailing the "Persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church Today," *Patriarch and Prophets* (edited by Rev. Michael Bordeaux, Praeger, N. Y., 1970), three other texts by Boris Talantov are given in English translation: "The Calamitous Situation of the Orthodox Church in the Kirov Region and the Role of the Moscow Patriarchate" (Nov. 10, 1966), which is very similar in content to the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers"; and a brief selection from two articles reaching the West in 1968 concerning the betrayal of the Church by the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate (described further below). Several other articles of his, including one on "Russian Society, 1965-68," have appeared in the West in Russian in the periodicals *Posev* and the *Messenger* of the Russian Student Christian Movement in Paris.

As a result of all these writings, Boris Talantov was arrested on June 12, 1969, and on September 3 he was sentenced to two years in prison for "anti-Soviet activities." In his final address at his trial, he affirmed the truth of his statements and his faithfulness to his religious convictions and bade farewell to his friends, since he did not expect to return alive from prison. And so it happened.

For the faithful inside of the USSR, Boris Talantov is an inspiring example of Christian courage against overwhelming obstacles. Here is how he is described by the Moscow intellectual Anatoly Krasnov-Levitin, who has himself suffered imprisonment for his outspokenness, in an article "Drama in Vyatka," which was written at the time of Talantov's arrest, and was then smuggled out of the USSR and published in *Posev* (October, 1969).

"I saw him only once in my life: a short little old man with a small gray beard, stooped, with a cheap little case in his bands, untalkative. In appearance, a typical man from the back woods... When all the newspapers and magazines were filled with foul slander against believers, and the hierarchs sat in their places, afraid to utter a word in defense of the Church, — at that time the humble teacher from Vyatka battled for the Church. He battled with the pen, writing striking letters to all fronts; he battled with the word, accusing the arbitrariness of the local authorities and the criminal connivance of the hierarchs. It was difficult for him, an old man. For in the provinces he was completely alone... In the provinces people are more timid than in Moscow, the authorities are more despotic, arbitrariness is more cynical..... But it turned out that in this meek little old man there was an iron will, titanic energy and a great heart. Diseases did not break him, nor difficult personal grief. He is a hero, but a reticent, unobtrusive, quiet hero. He gives his life simply, without affectation, without pose. He speaks the truth in an even, calm voice, and with an even, quiet step proceeds to Golgotha."

Thus Boris Talantov lived and died as a fearless confessor of the holy Orthodox Faith. With his bold protests against the authorities of State and Church and their persecution of Orthodoxy, he stands at the head of those many believers whose heartfelt appeals and protests have reached the free world in the past decade: the believers of Pochaev, the two Moscow priests, Archbishop Ermogen, and others. But in the depth of his analyses he surpasses them all, and indeed adds an entirely new dimension to their protests.

Boris Talantov is a philosophical thinker; indeed, he complains in one letter that his notes and commentarics on various philosophical works have been stolen by the KGB. Applying his philosophical mind to the tragic experiences of himself and his fellow believers under the Communist Yoke, he has penetrated to the very root of the "illness" of the present-day Moscow Patriarchate. The problem is not merely those injustices, persecutions, and lies against which the believers have boldly been protesting for the past decade, but is to be found most fundamentally in the very principles of "*Sergianism*" itself: the "concordat" which Metropolitan Sergius made with the Soviet Government in 1927. Talantov sets forth these views in a special article entitled "*Sergievshchina* (i.e., "the Sergianist affair," with a pejorative connotation), or Adaption to Atheism (the Leaven of Herod)". (The whole article is printed below, page 465; here only a few quotes are given.)

Decisively rejecting the generally favorable view of Metropolitan (Patriarch) Sergius that prevails in the West, Talantov states that "the roots of the serious ecclesiastical crisis which has now been revealed were planted precisely by Patriarch Sergius." The latter's "Declaration" in 1927 was not at all merely "a forced declaration of the Church Administration whose aim was to preserve church parishes"; rather, "this address and the ensuing activity of Metropolitan Sergius were *a betrayal of the Church.*" "Metropolitan Sergius by his adaptation and lies saved no one and nothing, except his own person." Sergianism "not only did not save the Russian Orthodox Church during the period of J. Stalin but, on the contrary, contributed directly to the loss of an authentic freedom of conscience and the transformation of the

Church Administration into an obedient instrument of the atheistic regime." Even during World War II, when some churches were reopened, this was not at all a result of the "Sergianist" compromise. "The opening of the churches within narrow limits was not the work of Patriarch Sergius or Patriarch Alexy, but this opening was accomplished by the atheistic regime itself under pressure from the common penple and for their appeasement."

In another even more penetrating article, "The Secret Participation of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Struggle of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Against the Orthodox Christian Church" (excerpts in *Patriarch and Prophets*, p. 331; Dunlop, pp. 101-106), Talantov sets forth the purposes for which the Moscow Patriarchate has become "an obedient instrument of the atheistic regime." At home, "the Moscow Patriarchate and the majority of the bishops are secretly participating in the organized activities of the atheistic regime, directed toward the closing of churches, the limitation of the spreading of faith and the undermining of it in our country." Abroad, "by means of shameless lies and slander" the Patriarchate tries to cover up "the unlawful closing of churches, the oppression of believers and their organizations, and the secret administrative measures directed toward the undermining of faith within the USSR... Secondly, the activity of the Patriarchate is directed toward leading by means of deceit and lies the development of the Christian movement in the whole world along a maximally false path and by this to undermine it." As an example of the latter point he cites the demand of the Moscow delegation at the Rhodes Pan-Orthodox Synod in 1961 that the Orthodox "repudiate Christian apologetics and an ideological struggle with contemporary atheism." In sum, Talantov warns, *"the activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad represents a conscious betrayal of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Christian faith. It has stepped forth on the world arena as a secret agent of worldwide anti-Christianity."*

No critic of the Moscow Patriarchate from the Russian Diaspora has come to more drastic conclusions than these. Within the USSR Talantov's words are fully in the tradition of the "Josephite" bishops of 1927, and indeed they demonstrate that the warnings of those bishops over the consequences of Sergius' "Declaration" were entirely justified and have been more than fulfilled. One might, therefore, ask what Talantov's position might be with regard to the "Josephite" or Catacomb Church in the USSR today. He in fact mentions it in one of his writings. "The Slobozhanin couple brought up their children in the Christian faith and in their home promulgated the Christian outlook on life among their fellow villagers. In their home believers, calling themselves members of the True Orthodox Christians, Wanderers, came to worship, sing hymns, and read the Bible. Their only difference from other Orthodox Christians was that they did not recognize Patriarch Alexy and other bishops installed by him, viewing them as traitors to the Church. In June, 1961, the People's Court held M. L. Slobozhanin to be a parasite and exiled him to remote areas for a period of five years... At the end of 1962 the same court deprived Tatyana Slobzhanina of parental rights and exiled her as a parasite to locations outside her district, and the children were forcibly placed in a children's home" ("Complaint to the Attorney General," p. 131). It is clear that Talantov stands together with these persecuted "True Orthodox Christians" against the tyranny of the State and the official Church hierarchy. As John Dunlop has noted (p. 123), on the popolar level the boundary between the "official" and the "catacomb" Church is somewhat fluid. The writings of Boris Talantov testify to the presence of a deep division today within the Moscow Patriarchate between the "Sergianist" hierarchy with its "Communist Christianity" and the truly Orthodox faithful who reject this impious "adaptation to atheism." Those in the West who affirm the possibility of dealing with the Moscow hierarchy because it is "persecuted," without seeing its own persecution of the faithful, stand accused by the writings of Boris Talantov of betraying the true Orthodox Christians of Russia.

God alone knows the future of the Russian Orthodox Church, but we cannot but believe that one day it will again be free. The writings of Boris Talantov point toward that day. Though they were begun with the aim of correcting present-day outrages to Orthodoxy, their final conclusions are so radical and so profound that they totally transcend the immediate conditions that gave them birth. They will doubtless be used as testimony at that longed-for Council of the entire free Russian Church, including the Churches of the Catacombs and of the Diaspora, that will finally judge the situation created by the Communist Yoke and Sergianism.

Boris Talantov was not only a polemicist and philosophical thinker; he was first and foremost simply an Orthodox Christian. A letter written by him in the last month of his life in prison (Dec. 7, 1970) reveals a side of his Christian character that might easily be overlooked in his public writings: his patient suffering, acceptance of God's will, and Christian love. (Russian text in the *Messenger* of the Russian Student Christian Movement, Paris, 1970, No. 4, p. 168.)

"Receiving your letters was a great joy for me, because, having found out on October 2, 1969, about your great misfortune, the whole time I have been worried about you and have fervently prayed to God to deliver you from misfortune.

"I offer you and your friends my heartfelt gratitude for the great kindness which you showed me when I fell into misfortune. Sincere and sacrificial love among us, Christians, is the seal of the fact that we are disciples of Christ. The awareness of this in itself consoles and encourages us, no matter in what condition we may find ourselves. For me, a sick old man, it is of course not easy to live out my confinement. But here I have met several truly believing prisoners, who, being younger than I, have looked after me and helped me as their very father. Likewise, believers in freedom also have comforted me by their letters, in which their sincere Christian love is evident.

"Since November 6 I have been in the hospital because of heart disease. The eye doctor has diagnosed a cataract in both eyes and said that I must have an operation, or else total blindness will ensue. But all these misfortunes have not broken my spirit and my faith: I can still write and read letters, glory be to God.

"I am in good spirits and with gratitude accept from God all my bitter trials.

"I fervently pray to God for your health and the health of all faithful Christians.

"May the Lord God preserve you from all misfortunes and troubles and grant His perfect joy.

"Your friend, Boris Talantov."

34

Sergianism, the Leaven of Herod

By BORIS TALANTOV

The two texts that follow—they are actually two parts of a single essay—are of crucial importance for an understanding of the Russian Orthodox Church under the Communist Yoke. They were written by a true confessor of Orthodoxy, who died in prison in the Soviet Union in 1971 for having written these and similar texts. They are presented here as a direct response to the plea of the author himself (p. 484): "This betrayal. . . must be made known to all believers in Russian and abroad, because such an activity of the Patriarchate. . . represents a great danger for all believers." The texts are primary documents exposing with direct and irrefutable proof the conscious betrayal of Russian Orthodoxy by its own hierarchs.

Russian Orthodoxy today—betrayed by its hierarchs in the USSR, and representsd only by the free bishops abroad and by a remnant of the faithful at home and abroad—lives in expectation of a restoration of true and canonical church order. This will doubtless come only at the longed-for Council of all Russian Orthodoxy after the fall of the Communist regime, when those who have kept the faith will be justified. For this restoration of true order the writings of Boris Talantov will be invaluable testimony. For they come from one who consciously experienced the Soviet Yoke from its beginning and they thus testify from within not only to the facts of Russian church life during those years, but more importantly, to the attitude toward them of the Orthodox faithful. Previously this had been known to some extent through those who had escaped from the USSR, but from within the country there was nothing to be heard but the repetitious propaganda of the Moscow Patriarchate, which attempted to drown out the truth and did iudeed succeed in *duping whole generations of gullible church figures in the West. But now, as the culmination of a decade of protests, the true attitades of the faithful who remain in Russia have become known.*

Boris Talantov, as these texts reveal, did not leave the communion of the Moscow Patriarchate; even though he was sympathetic to the members of the True Orthodox(Catacomb) Church whom he knew, he nonetheless repeats the standard Soviet terminology in calling this Church a "sect." Here, surely, one may be allowed to disagree. Without passing judgment on those who remain in the Patriarchate, we abroad can nonetheless not help but see that the solution of the present crisis of the Moscow Patriarchate—which is actually the culmination, as Talantov points out, of the betrayal of 1927—cannot come from within the Patriarchate alone, but must come from the whole confessing Orthodox Church of Russia: the believers in the Catacombs who remain faithful to the testaments of Metropolitan Joseph and the many bishops in 1927 who declared the "Sergianist" Church schismatic; the true believers who remain in the Patriarchate; and the Church Outside of Russia. About the latter it is hardly likely that Talantov could have had any unbiased information. It must be remembered, then, that these documents offer, not a complete picture of the state of Russian Orthodoxy today, but rather an authentic voice of the Orthodox faithful within the USSR, and specifically of the Moscow Patriarchate's own flock. These texts, however, are doubtless some of the primary documents from which the "complete picture" of 20th-century Russian Orthodoxy will one day be known.

The two texts are here presented in full, without omissions or additions of any kind, as translated from the Russian manuscripts obtained in 1968 from an absolutely reliable source in Paris by the Rev. Michael Bordeaux of the Centre for the Stndy of Religion and Communism. The two titles and all parentheses and emphases (italics) in the text are those of the original; all notes and comments of the translators have been confined to the footnotes. The texts are published here with the kind permission of Rev. Bordeaux.

I. SERGIANISM,[*] OR ADAPTATION TO ATHEISM (THE LEAVEN OF HEROD)

IN ENGLAND there has appeared a book by Nikita Struve, *Christians in Contemporary Russia*,[†] in which he, like others also in the West, in general approves the activity of Patriarch Sergius, even comparing him with Sergius of Radonezh and Patriarch Ermogen.[*†] In the West Patriarch Sergius is virtually considered to be the saviour of the Orthodox Church in Russia. Such an incorrect evaluation of the activity of Patriarch Sergius is based on the fact that Western researchers are not familiar with the underground facts and manifestations of the life of the Russian Orthodox Church. The roots of the profound ecclesiastical crisis which has now been revealed were laid precisely by Patriarch Sergius.

In his Appeal to the faithful of August 19, 1927,[**] Metropolitan Sergius set forth new bases for the activity of the Church Administration, which at that very time were called by E. Yaroslavsky[††] an "adaptation" to the atheistic reality of the USSR.

"Adaptation" consisted first and foremost of a false separation of all the spiritual needs of man into the purely religious and the socio-political. The Church was to satisfy the purely religious needs of citizens of the USSR without touching on the socio-political, which were to be resolved and satisfied by the official ideology of the CPSU.[*] The socio-political activity of every believer, according to this Appeal, should be directed to the building of a socialist society under the direction of the CPSU. In its further development this Adaptation resulted in the theory of Soviet theologians, according to which the Communistic organization of society is the only happy and just one, one supposedly indicated by the Gospel itself. At the same time no criticism was allowed of the official ideology, laws, or actions of the authorities. Any accusation against the actions of the civil authorities or any doubt of the correctness of the official ideology was considered a deviation from purely religious activity and counter-revolution. The Church Administration headed by Metropolitan Sergius not only did not defend the believers and clergy who went to concentration camps for accusing the arbitrariness and violence of the civil authorities, but even spoke out itself, with slave-like servility, for the condemnation of such people as counter-revolutionaries. *In essence Adaptation to atheism represented a mechanical union of Christian dogmas and rites with the socio-political views of the official ideology of the CPSU.* In actual fact all religious activity was reduced to external rites. The church preaching of those clergymen who held strictly to Adaptation was totally remote from life and therefore had no influence whatever on the hearers. As a result of this the intellectual, social, and family life of believers, and the raising of the younger generation remained outside the Church's influence. This concealed great dangers for the Church and Christian faith. One cannot worship Christ and at the same time in social and family life tell lies, do what is unjust, use violence, and dream of an earthly paradise. Subsequently, Adaptation to atheism culminated in the heretical teaching of H. Johnson concerning a new religion, which in his opinion was to replace the Christian religion and be a synthesis of Christianity and Marxism-Leninism (see H. Johnson, *Christianity and Communism,* Moscow, 1957).† *Now the absurdity of H. Johnson's teaching is evident.*

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[*] Sergianism: *Sergievshchina.* This word is not precisely translatable into English, but is approximately "the Sergianist affair," with a pejorative connotation.

[†] London, 1967; original edition in French: *Les Chretiens en U.R.S.S.*, Paris, 1963. Nikita Struve is a Russian intellectual of the "Paris" school and present editor of the *Vestnik* of the Russian Student Christian Movement.

[*†] Outstanding Russian saints of the 14th and 16th centuries.

[**] The Appeal (Declaration) of Metropolitan Sergius was actually issued on July 16|29, 1927, but it was first published in the official Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* on August 19.

[††] Head of the League of Militant Atheists, in charge of the anti-religious propaganda and activities conducted by the Soviet regime.

[*] Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

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† Hewlett Johnson, the notorious "Red Dean of Canterbury," a "Christian" apologist for Communism, wrote his book in English under the title *Christians and Communism* (London, 1956). That Soviet authorities should immediately have this book translated and printed in Moscow reveals that they are not entirely opposed to "religion"—not to a *Communist* form of religion!

LEAVEN OF HEROD

The Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius of August 19, 1927, made a painful impression on all believers, as a cringing before the atheist authorities. Some made peace with it as an unavoidable evil, while others came out decisively with a condemnation of it. A part of the bishops and faithful separated from Metropolitan Sergius. The bishops who had condemned the Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius were soon arrested and banished to concentration camps, where they died. The ordinary believers who separated formed a special sect, called the True Orthodox Church, which from the very beginning of its formation right up to the present time has been proscribed.

Contemporary influential atheists regard Adaptation as a modernization of religion which is politically useful for the CPSU and harmless for the materialistic ideology. "This (Adaptation — our addition. B.T.) *is one of the paths to the dying out of religion*" (Journal, *Science and Religion,** no. 12, 1966, p. 78).

Many both among us and in the West regarded and regard the Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius as a statement made by the Church Administration under duress, with the aim of preserving church parishes and clergymen during the time of the despotism of J. Stalin. *But this is incorrect.* The Communist Party saw in this Appeal the Church's weakness, the readiness of the new Church Administration to fulfill unconditionally any instructions whatsoever of the civil authority, a readiness to give over to the arbitrariness of the authorities, under the guise of counter-revolutionaries, those clergymen who dared to accuse arbitrariness and violence. Here is how E. Yaroslavsky evaluated this in 1927: "With religion, even though Bishop Sergius may have adorned it in whatever worldly garb you may want, with the influence of religion on the masses of workers, we shall wage war, as we wage war with every religion, with every church" (E. Yaroslavsky, *On Religion,* Moscow, 1957, p. 155).

Objectively this Appeal and the subsequent activity of Metropolitan Sergius were a betrayal of the Church. From the end of 1929 until June, 1941, there occurred the mass closing and barbarous destruction of churches, arrests and sentencing by Troikas † and secret trials of virtually every single clergyman, most of whom were simply physically exterminated in concentration camps.

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* A leading official Soviet anti-religious periodical.

† Troika: a committee of three secret police officials who sentenced their victims without hearing or appeal.

In 1930 Pope Pius XI came out before world public opinion with a protest against the persecution of Christians in the Soviet Union. How did Metropolitan Sergius react to all this? In the Theophany Cathedral in Moscow, with a cross in his hands, he came out with a declaration that there was no persecution at all against believers and their organizations in the Soviet Union, and there never had been any. Individual clergymen and believers, according to his assurance, were tried not for faith, but for counter-revolutionary manifestations against the Soviet regime. *Such a declaration was not only a monstrous lie, but also a base betrayal of the Church and believers. By this declaration Metropolitan Sergius covered up the monstrous crimes of J. Stalin and became an obedient tool in his hands.*

It should be noted that although the majority of bishops in 1927 acknowledged Metropolitan Sergius as their head, nonetheless in their activity they did not hold to the "Appeal" and in their sermons they courageously accused the arbitrariness, lawlessness, and cruelty of the civil authorities, called on the people to stand firmly for the faith and help the persecuted. Therefore, for their sermons they were quickly placed in concentration camps and perished there. Of course, many clergymen and believers were placed in concentration camps for no reason at all, as potentially dangerous elements. In these circumstances a courageous statement by Metropolitan Sergius in defense of justice and faith could have had a great significance for the fate of the Russian Orthodox Church, just as the courageous battle for faith and justice of Cardinal Wyszynski had a great significance for the Polish Church at the end of the '40's.

And what did Metropolitan Sergius save by his Adaptation and monstrous lie? At the beginning of the Second World War in every region, out of many hundreds of churches there remained five or ten, the majority of priests and almost all the bishops (with the exception of a few who collaborated with the authorities like Metropolitan Sergius) had been martyred in concentration camps. *Thus Metropolitan Sergius by his Adaptation and lying saved no one and nothing, except his own person.* In the eyes of believers he lost all authority, but in exchange he acquired the good will of the 'father of the peoples," J. Stalin.

The majority of the churches that remained did not acknowledge Metropolitan Sergius.

The role of Metropolitan Sergius in the restoration of churches during the Second World War is greatly exaggerated in the West and, in particular, in the book of N. Struve. This evidently speaks of an ignorance of many underground manifestations and facts in the life of the Church in the USSR.

The Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius to the believing citizens of the USSR on June 22, 1941, was received by true believers as a new cringing before the despotic regime and a new betrayal of the Church's interests. *All believers in Russia regarded and regard the Second World War as the wrath of God for the immense lawlessness, impiety, and persecution of Christians which occurred in Russia from the beginning of the October Revolution.* Therefore, not to remind the people and the government of this in an hour of dreadful trials, not to call the people to repentance, not to demand immediately the restoration of churches and the rehabilitation of all innocently condemned citizens of the USSR, *was a great sin, a great impiety.* Metropolitan Sergius again revealed himself to be an obedient tool of the atheist regime, which at that moment wished to use for its own ends the religious feelings of its citizens with the fewest possible concessions from atheism.

The restoration of churches within limited and narrow bounds was the State policy of J. Stalin, and not the result of the activity of Metropolitan Sergius. At that time among the people and in the army there was open talk of fundamental changes in domestic regulations in the land. The people hoped that immediately after the end of the war there would be declared freedom of occupation and in particular the liquidation of the collective farms, freedom of party, and freedom of conscience. The opeoing of churches was the bone which J. Stalin threw to a people worn out by war and hunger. The very opening of churches occurred under the control of State Security. And these organs sought out often priests from among those who remained at liberty or had sat out their term of imprisonment. In the Western Ukraine there were cases when priests refused to celebrate in churches under Metropolitan Sergius, and later Patriarch Alexis, and these same organs put these priests in concentration camps. In many regions the Patriarchate and the bishops took no part at all in the opening of churches. There were cases when new bishops under one pretext or another even resisted the opeoing of churches and the assignment to parishes of priests who had been in prison. The restoration of church life was incomplete, external, and temporary. From 1949 on the CPSU began imperceptibly to turn toward putting new pressure on the Church.

Thus, the opening of churches within narrow bounds was not the work of the hands of Metropolitan Sergius or Patriarch Alexis, but rather this opening was done by the atheist regime itself under pressure from the simple people in order to pacify them.

Patriarch Sergius, and later Patriarch Alexis, gathered and placed new bishops who, as distinct from the former bishops, who as a rule perished in the concentration camps (there were, of course, exceptions), were obedient to the Patriarchate and assimilated well the leaven of Herod, i.e., Adaptation to the mighty of this world. Here is how, for example, Bishop Vladimir of Kirov expressed Adaptation in his sermon of May 28, 1967. "We must adapt ourselves to new conditions and circumstances of life like a little stream which, on meeting a rock in its path, goes around it. We live together with atheists and must take them into consideration and not do anything that displeases them."

It is interesting that B. V. Talantov was told almost the very same thing at the KGB* on February 14, 1967: "You,"—said the KGB agent, addressing Talantov—"demand that all closed churches be opened; but you live together with atheists and must take their wishes into consideration, and they do not wish that churches be opened."

In the St. Seraphim church in Kirov on January 20, 1966—the day of commemoration of St. John the Baptist—one priest said in his sermon: "John the Baptist taught everyone very simply: obey the authorities in everything." From this it is evident that the new bishop, having assimilated Adaptation to atheism, has become an obedient tool in the hands of the atheist regime, and this is a most ruinous result for the Church of the long activity of Metropolitan, and then Patriarch, Sergius.

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* State Security-Secret Police; known earlier under the initials NKVD, Cheka, and (originally) GPU.

LEAVEN OF HEROD

Adaptation to the atheist regime was clearly and precisely set forth in the book, *The Truth about Religion in Russia*, published under the editorship of Patriarch Sergius in the last years of his life, with the participation of Metropolitan (now Patriarch) Alexis and Metropolitan Nicholas.†

In this book Patriarch Sergius and Metropolitans Alexis and Nicholas categorically affirm that there has never been in the USSR any persecution of Christians, that information in the Western press about these persecutions are malicious inventions of the enemies of the Soviet regime, that bishops and priests during the years 1930-41 were sentenced by Soviet courts exclusively for their counter-revolutionary activity, and that the Church Administration itself at that time was in agreement with their being sentenced. The monstrous lie of this affirmation is apparent from the fact that very many priests who were executed or perished in concentration camps under J. Stalin were rehabilitated under N. S. Krushchev. The most courageous fighters for truth and Christian faith are declared in this book to be schismatics, "politicians," and practically heretics. This book should be anathematized; it will be an eternal shameful memorial of Patriarch Sergius. *And now with full justification we can call Adaptation to the atheistic regime by the name of Patriarch Sergius — Sergianism.*

Did Adaptation (Sergianism) save the Russsian Orthodox Church?

From what has been set forth it is clear that not only did it not save the Russian Orthodox Church during the despotism of J. Stalin, but on the contrary it furthered the loss of genuine freedom of conscience and the conversion of the Church Administration into an obedient tool of the atheistic regime.

Cardinal Wyszynski's categorical rejection of Adaptation to the atheistic regime and his subsequent and firm battle for Evangelical truth and genuine freedom of conscience has resulted in the fact that today in Poland the

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† Of Krutitsk, notorious apologist of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Soviet regime abroad after the Second World War. He later fell from favor and died under mysterious circumstances in 1961.

Church* in actuality is independent from the State and enjoys considerable freedom.

Thus, one cannot defend the Church by a lie.

Adaptation is little faith, lack of faith in the power and Providence of God.

Adaptation is incompatible with true Christianity, because at its foundation there is a lie, servility before the mighty of this world, and a false separation of spiritual needs into the purely religious and the socio-political. According to the teaching of Christ, faith must direct the intellectual, family, and social life of every Christian. *Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world* (Matt. 5:13, 14), said Christ, addressing His followers. In accordance with this Cardinal Wyszynski says: "In Poland the Church must penetrate everything: books, schools, upbringing, the people's culture... painting, sculpture and architecture, theater, radio and television... social and economic life" (quoted from the journal *Science and Religion,* no. 1, 1967, p. 63).

II. THE SECRET PARTICIPATION OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE IN THE BATTLE OF THE CPSU AGAINST THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

(THE CRISIS OF THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATION)

THE "ADAPTATION" which was planted by Metropolitan Sergius has resulted in the fact that, beginning in 1960, the Moscow Patriarchate and the majority of bishops objectively have secretly participated in all actions of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, a participation directed toward the closing of churches, the limitation of the propagation of the faith, and the undermining of the latter among the people.

The majority of bishops in the period 1960-64 withdrew from the battle against the illegal closure of churches and the illegal removal of priests from registration. The numerous complaints of believers to the Moscow Patriarchate against the illegal closure of churches and the removal of priests from registration remained without any answer. *More than this, the Moscow*

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* I.e., the Roman Catholic Church, which is dominant in Poland.

Patriarchate itself issued a circular concerning the fusion of parishes which did not have sufficient income. As a result of abuse, many churches which did have sufficient income were closed by this circular. Now the atheists who hold power, together with Metropolitan Nikodim, affirm, relying on this circular, that supposedly all the churches closed in the years 1960-64 lacked sufficient income. This lie is repeated in an article in the *Kirov Pravda* of May 31, 1967: "With an Open Visor."

Certain bishops, for example Bishop John,† have closed churches themselves and removed worthy priests. All this has become known now from the letters of the Moscow priests N. Eshliman and G. Yakunin, the "Open Letter of Kirov believers," and many other materials. *An irrefutable proof that the Moscow Patriarchate has secretly participated in the closing of churches is the fact that neither the bishops (with some exceptions, for example Archbishop Ermogen, who, however, was removed from his See by the Patriarchate), nor the Moscow Patriarchate has ever come out anywhere with a protest against the illegal closure of churches and the removal of priests from registration, and what is more they have even come out with declarations that there was no mass illegal closure of churches in the USSR in the years* 1960-64. *Churches, according to their assertion, were closed because they did not have sufficient income.*

With the aim of limiting the propagation of faith and undermining it among the people, the bishops have unconditionally submitted to all the oral directives of the authorities, which have been directed toward the limitation and undermining of faith, and they have demanded the same thing of priests. Thus, for example, Bishop John of Kirov firmly declared to his priests that any one of them who will not unconditionally fulfill the directives of the authorities will be forbidden to serve as a priest. *At the same time, the priests and bishops, in fulfilling the oral directives of the authorities, presented these directives to the people as if they came from the Church Administration and not from the civil regime, and they even uncanonically demonstrated their lawfulness and necessity.* The Patriarchate itself issued a number of circulars directed to the limitation and undermining of faith; such was, for example, Circular no. 1917, which demanded of priests as an official obligation to cooperate in the registration of passports while celebrating private services on request.* All this is discussed in detail in the letters of the Moscow priests, in the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers," and other letters and complaints of believers.

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† Of Kirov; see below.

Here are the chief measures directed toward the limitation and undermining of faith which are being carried out by the authorities of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, with the participation of the clergy:

1. Obligatory registration of passports before the celebration of certain services by request.† 2. Not allowing children of school age to receive confession, communion, or baptism. 3. Chasing beggars out of churches and church yards. 4. Forbidding believers to spend the night on church porches. 5. Institution of the time for celebrating services by request in village churches of the Kirov region, during the summertime, at from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. 6. Forbidding the administering of communion and unction to the sick at home without special permission.*

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* *Treby*: baptisms, funerals, etc.

† This important rule is a part of the general system of terror that still prevails in the USSR for believers. These records are transmitted by local authorities to places of employment, etc., and the believer who dares ask for a baptism, funeral, or some other open service finds himself soon out of a job and in general ostracized from society.

* A few months after this was written, this very rule was applied against Talantov's dying wife, as Talantov himself describes in his "Complaint to the Attorney General of the Soviet Union" of April 26, 1968 (English text in *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas*, Aug. 15|31, 1968): "On the day of her death, I wished to have the rite of unction performed for her, as she desired. But the Dean of the sole remaining open Orthodox church in the city of Kirov, that of St. Seraphim, told me that the local authorities forbade the rite of unction to be performed in homes. This deplorable case demonstrates that believing Christians in the city of Kirov are deprived nowadays even of those rights that they were given by J. V. Stalin."

LEAVEN OF HEROD

Certain bishops, for example Bishop John of Kirov, by their amoral conduct, outrageous acts, and despotic willfulness have striven to undermine faith among the people; and the Moscow Patriarchate, knowing of the intolerable conduct of such bishops from the numerous complaints of believers, not only has not brought such bishops to ecclesiastical trial, but has even promoted them. Such bishops have removed worthy priests from parishes and placed unworthy persons in their place. All this has led to the moral corruption of the clergy and a total undermining of faith in the Church.

In conformity with Adaptation to atheism, sermons in church as a rule have become scholastic discourses, remote from life, on religious themes. Because of their remoteness from time and space, they cannot act in any way on the hearers. In such sermons there is lacking even any mention of such basic vices, errors, and faults in contemporary life as lying, flattery, the breaking up of families, moral corruption, the atheistic upbringing of children, servile fear before the mighty of this world, and injustice.

The Moscow Patriarchate has made the rejection of Christian apologetics, of the ideological battle with atheism, the chief principle of its activity, both within the country and outside.

Such religious-moral instruction on the part of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church cannot interest the younger generation or act positively upon it. *Thus, the religious-moral instruction of the Russian Orthodox Church is such that it cannot lead to the propagation of faith among the younger generation. By this alone the continued existence of the Church is undermined.*

In every diocese there is felt an acute insufficiency of priests even for the small number of churches that are open. For the propagation of faith and its strengthening it is essential to strive to increase in each diocese the number of worthy priests who are devoted to the Church and qualified to spread the faith. *But the bishops have absolutely withdrawn from the selection, instruction, and training of the clergy ranks, by which they definitively undermine faith and the Church.*

The number of theological schools and the number of those studying in them is so small that it cannot even make up the natural decrease of clergymen. Education and instruction in the theological schools are set up in such a way that out of them there come *bureaucrats in cassocks* who are ready to adapt themselves to external circumstances by any means whatever for the sake of acquiring a secure, easy, and undisturbed life in an atheistic State. In them the chief thing is killed: idealism, courage, and aspiration for justice. The spirit of the Seminaries (and Academies) is Adaptation. In the theological schools there is being conducted an intensified recruitment of students as secret agents of the KGB, especially in the foreign divisions of the Academies.

Thus at the present time the Moscow Patriarchate and the majority of bishops are secretly participating in the organized actions of the atheist regime (CPSU) which are directed toward the closing of churches, the limitation of the propagation of faith and its undermining in our country.

The activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad is directed, in the first place, to covering up, by means of shameless lying and slander, the mass illegal closure of churches, the oppressions of believers and their organizations, and the secret administrative measures directed toward the undermining of faith within the USSR.

In the second place, the activity of the Patriarchate is directed to deflecting as much as possible, by means of deceit and lying, the development of the Christian movement in the whole world on to a false path and thereby undermining it.

Such, for example, was the proposal of the Moscow Patriarchate at the Rhodes Conference of Orthodox Churches to renounce Christian apologetics and the ideological battle against contemporary atheism.* *The activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad is a conscious betrayal of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Christian faith. She steps forth on the world arena as a secret agent of worldwide anti-Christianity.*

Metropolitan Nikodim is betraying the Church and Christians not out of fear but for conscience's sake; thus a complete unmasking of his and the Moscow Patriarchate's traitorous activity will mean the end of his shady career.

But the time has come for the unmasking of the traitorous activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad, the hour of judgment upon Metropolitan

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* This occurred in 1961. The question of atheism and the means of battling against it were on the agenda of this Conference, but at the objection of Metropolitan (then Archbishop) Nikodim the question was dropped.

Nikodim.†

An irrefutable proof of the undermining, traitorous activity abroad of the Moscow Patriarchate is an event which arose in connection with the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers to Patriarch Alexis."

In August, 1966, this letter was sent by believers to Patriarch Alexis. In it the believers expressed their support for the letter of the Moscow priests N. Eshliman and G. Yakunin and described the misfortunes which the parishes of the Kirov region had suffered as a result of the lawless deeds of the authorities of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and Bishop John of Kirov. This letter, which accuses the arbitrariness and lawlessness of the local civil authorities and the Church Administration, does not touch at all upon the Soviet social and governmental order and has no relation whatever to the organs of State Security. The letter was signed by 12 believers of the Kirov region with exact addresses given. Eight of those who signed the letter were from the city of Kirov (formerly Vyatka). Among their number was the author of the letter B. V. Talantov, whose signature and address stood first. He is well known to the Patriarchate and to Metropolitan Nikodim. Three of those who signed were from the city of Nolinsk, and one of these was the student of the Odessa Seminary Nikodim Nikolaevich Kamenskikh. The twelfth believer who signed the letter was Agrippina Dimitrievna Zyryanova, an elderly woman from the city of Belaya Kholunitsa.

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† Here Talantov seems to be expressing the fervent hope of many in the ideological "underground" in the USSR, rather than any immediately impending event. This is corroborated by the report of a Russian Orthodox student from America concerning a meeting of members of the widespread "Democratic Movement" which he had the rare privilege of attending in Leningrad early in 1970. Some of those present expressed their opinion on the subject of the "autocephaly" which was just then being granted the American Metropolia by the Moscow Patriarchate. Their attitude was summed up by one member who, mentioning that outspoken protest against the Patriarchate was finally becoming evident in the USSR, castigated the "naive Americans" thus: "What are you Americans doing?! Here for 50-odd years we've been trying to minimize the popular authority of any and all such governmental agencies as the Moscow Patriarchate, and you, in conditions of freedom, undo all our work by accepting their authority!"

She had been constantly working for the opening of the All Saints church in the city of Belaya Kholunitsa, which had been illegally closed in 1962.

This letter became known abroad, and on December 8, 1966, BBC Radio revealed in brief its content. Although in essence the letter was not a complete unmasking of the unworthy activity of the Moscow Patriarchate, nonetheless it threw a shadow abroad on all the assurances of Metropolitan Nikodim and others concerning the well-being of the Russian Orthodox Church. Evidently this very much disturbed the Patriarchate and the KGB. They began to act simultaneously and according to an agreed-upon plan.

On February 14, 1967, B. V. Talantov was summoned to the Kirov Administration of the KGB. Here, after he had been threatened at first with prison, it was proposed that he renounce the "Open Letter" in the form of a written declaration that could be published in one of the newspapers. Evidently he was to have declared in writing that he had never composed or signed the "Open Letter" that had become known abroad. He categorically refused to do this and confirmed in written form that he was the author precisely of the letter that had become known abroad, and likewise of the letter to the newspaper *Izvestia* (received by the newspaper on July 19, 1966), and that he was ready to bear responsibility for the content of these letters. At that time he did not understand at all why there was demanded of him the renunciation of his own signature in a written declaration which, what is more, was to be published in one of the rentral newspapers. Later events solved this enigma.

On February 25, 1967, Radio BBC revealed the replies to questions put to Metropolitan Nikodim in connection with the "Open Letter from Kirov." He declared this letter anonymous and therefore not deserving of trust. To confirm the sincerity of his words he expressed his readiness to make an oath on the Cross and the Gospel. The name and address of B. V. Talantov without any doubt were well known to him from the previous letters of B. V. Talantov. Then why did he make such a risky declaration? One would think that he was trusting in the impossibility for the Kirov believers to refute abroad the deceit of his declaration. But subsequent events compel one to think that he was trusting that the KGB by threats would force the believers who had signed the "Open Letter" to renounce their signatures.

LEAVEN OF HEROD

At the very time when, in London, in the pompous grandeur of his social position Metropolitan Nikodim was striving by a false oath to prove the anonymity and dubiousness of the "Letter from Kirov," in Kirov itself at the KGB Administration it was proposed to B. V. Talantov, with threats of prison, that he renounce his signature under this letter. Evidently the coincidence of these events was not accidental.

B. V. Talantov, indignant at the shameless lie of Metropolitan Nikodim, on March 19, 1967, sent to Patriarch Alexis a new letter, in which he confirmed the authenticity of the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers" and sternly accused the impious action of Metropolitan Nikodim. At the same time he sent a copy of his letter to the Patriarch to Odessa to his young friend N. N. Kamenskikh, who at this time was a student in the second class of the Odessa Theological Seminary. Through N. N. Kamenskikh this letter, and likewise the impious statement of Metropolitan Nikodim in London, became known to almost all the students at the Odessa Theological Seminary and to many residents of the city of Odessa. From this moment on new events began to occur.

The letter of B. V. Talantov to Patriarch Alexis of March 19, 1967, became known to the Kirov administration of the KGB at the end of March or in the first days of April, apparently through Bishop Vladimir of Kirov. Immediately after this the seven Kirov believers who had signed the letter were called to the Kirov city council one at a time for interrogation. Here the secretary of the city council, A. Y. Ostanina, together with a KGB agent (the latter was not present in all cases), threatened each one with prison if he would sign any other document composed by "the dangerous political criminal" Talantov. Notwithstanding all the intimidations, none of those interrogated renounced his signature under the "Open Letter."

Bishop Vladimir of Kirov travelled to Odessa and on April 12 he visited for some reason Archbishop Sergius. On April 15 B. V. Talantov informed his friend N. N. Kamenskikh, by a letter sent to the Seminary, of the interrogations in Kirov of the believers who had signed the "Open Letter." But this letter N. N. Kamenskikh did not receive.

On April 26 the Inspector of the Seminary Alexander Nikolaevich Kravchenko summoned N. N. Kamenskikh, read him B. V. Talantov's letter of April 15, and demanded of him that he renounce in written form his support of the "Open Letter" of B. V. Talantov. N. N. Kamenskikh had either to renounce the genuineness of his own signature (meaning that his name and address had been put without his knowledge), or declare that B. V. Talantov had somehow deceived him. A. N. Kravchenko warned N. N. Kamenskikh that if he did not make such a declaration he would be excluded from the Seminary. In order to win N. N. Kamenskikh to his side, A. N. Kravchenko made use of the following sly tactic. He said: "Write this declaration, and I won't show it to anyone. When you finish the Seminary I will give it back to you." But N. N. Kamenskikh saw through the Inspector's trick and categorically refused to sign the declaration that was demanded of him. At the same time he asked the Inspector to give him the letter of B. V. Talantov, inasmuch as it was addressed to him. The Inspector refused to give him the letter and ordered him to think about his fate. From this moment there began a battle between N. N. Kamenskikh and the leadership of the Seminary, which was fulfilling the will of Metropolitan Nikodim and the KGB. For a whole month the entire Seminary followed this battle with intense interest. *One might call it the war of Nikodim the small with Nikodim the great.* The first is small both in age (he is 24 years old) and in his position in society. The second is of mature years and high position in the Church and in Soviet society.

Nikodim Kamenskikh is the son of a believing Christian who was banished to the Kirov region. Want and hunger in childhood and adolescence, constant endurance from the age of 17 of threats, insults, and oppressions for his open confession of Christian faith — have left their imprint on N. N. Kamenskikh. He suffers from a stomach ulcer. From the age of 17 he served as an altar-boy in the church in the village of Bais in the Urzhumsk district of the Kirov region. At this young age he courageously defended the church in the village of Bais against illegal closure. Twice on this account he travelled to Moscow to the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (see the letter of B. V. Talantov to the newspaper *Izvestia* of July 19, 1966) and by this drew on himself the anger of the local authorities. When he was summoned for military service to the Urzhumsk district military committee, at his medical examination he categorically refused to take off his neck cross, and for this he was sent for medical examination to the psychiatric hospital in the city of Kotelnich. After many trials and abuses he was excused from military service on account of illness (stomach ulcer), but he was not left in peace. At the beginning of 1963 the local authorities sent the "fanatic" Nikodim out of the city of Bais and he became a homeless laborer-stovemaker, earning his living by sporadic jobs. By performing work too difficult for the state of his health he earned 30 to 40 rubles a month. The militia of Urzhumsk district fined him at this time, as a "parasite," 30 rubles, thus depriving him of his living for a whole month. Finally with great difficulty he found work and registered* in the city of Nolinsk. But want, a wandering life, and overwork put him in a hospital cot for a long time. After all these adventures he succeeded in 1965 in entering the Odessa Theological Seminary. For the whole course of his conscious life he has seen around him and has himself personally endured insults and oppressions for his open confession of the Christian faith. In his own life's experience he became convinced that true believing Christians are the pariahs of Soviet society. He signed the "Open Letter of Kirov believers" not with ink but with his own blood. Therefore it is understandable that he could not renounce his support of this letter, and he began courageously to battle for justice with Nikodim the great, who, having by cunning Adaptation attained high rank, human glory and wealth, entered on the path of injustice. In this battle Nikodim the small placed all his hope in the invisible God, while Nikodim the great placed his hope in visibly-mighty human power and strength.

On May 7 B. V. Talantov, surmising by the silence of N. N. Kamenskikh that his letter of April 15 had not arrived, sent him at the Seminary a new letter in which he repeated the content of the letter of April 15. At the same time he sent a letter to the Seminary to the seminarian of the third class, Ivan Ilyich Naumov, a friend of N. N. Kamenskikh, in which he asked I. I. Naumov to communicate to N. N. Kamenskikh the content of his letters of April 15 and May 7, if he had not received them, and likewise to give his greetings to seminarian Leonid Michaelovich Beresnev.

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* There is no freedom of movement in the USSR. Each citizen must have a passport in order to live anywhere, and he must register with local authorities on entering or leaving any town — and this registration may be refused at the whim of the local authorities.

These letters were received by the Seminary not later than May 12 or 13 and were intercepted by Inspector A. N. Kravchenko, who did not even tell the addressees about them. From these letters he learned that I. I. Naumov and L. M. Beresnev were sympathetic to Nikodim Kamenskikh. Evidently the Inspector A. N. Kravchenko checked all letters coming to the seminarians, at the assignment of the KGB. In order to clarify the "freedom and secrecy of correspondence," one must point out that N. N. Kamenskikh, thinking that his letters sent to Talantov were not reaching the latter, sent him during May two letters addressed to D. I. Okulov, janitor of the St. Seraphim church in Kirov, who was well acquainted with B. V. Talantov. D. I. Okulov did not receive either letter. This means that someone working at the St. Seraphim church, at the assignment of the KGB, was checking all letters that came to this church and holding them back at his discretion. Thus, secret agents of the KGB control all correspondence coming from the Seminary, the churches, and "suspicious" believers.

On May 17 the Inspector, A. N. Kravchenko, summoned I. I. Nanmov and L. M. Beresnev and demanded of them that they persuade Nikodim Kamenskikh to write a declaration renouncing his support of the "Open Letter." He told them that if they did not act on Nikodim in the direction he wished, they would be excluded from the Seminary as his accomplices.

On May 19, Nikodim Kamenskikh gave to the Inspector of the Seminary A. N. Kravchenko an official declaration, wherein he once again confirmed the authenticity of his signature and his agreement with the content of the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers."

On May 21 the Inspector told Nikodim that he must appear the next morning, May 22, at the KGB at the address 43 Babel, Bureau of Passports, Garbus 3. Nikodim Kamenskikh, after writing down this address, calmly said that he would not go to the KGB Administration until he received an official notification. This caused the Inspector to lose his self-control, and he began to reproach Nikodim for going against the Patriarch, because he supported the Moscow priests. He concluded his discourse with the angry words: "If you do not leave the Seminary voluntarily, you will be turned out, and you will be sorry when you go home."

On May 22 Nikodim was summoned to the diocesan administration and here by telephone an official of the Council for Religious Affairs asked him why he had not appeared at the KGB Administration. He replied that he would not go there until he received an official notification.

On May 24 the Rector of the Seminary took from N. N. Kamenskikh his military card and passport and told him that he was to be expelled from Odessa. He replied that all blame for this rested on the Rector and the Inspector.

On May 29 the Rector and the Inspector of the Seminary proposed to Nikodim Kamenskikh that he leave the Seminary "at his own wish." He refused to do this. *In the evening the Faculty Council excluded him from the student-body of the Seminary for failing to conform to the spirit of the Seminary.* He was given a roll in which it was stated that he is transferred in the first category to the third class, and a certificate of exclusion. On June 19 he sent a declaration from the city of Kirov to the Patriarch in which he again confirmed his agreement with the "Open Letter" and asked that he be allowed to undertake studies in the third class.

On June 20 the militia of the city of Nolinsk refused to register him at the place of his former residence, and he again became a homeless pauper. But the battle was not yet finished. On May 20 four of the persons who had signed the "Open Letter" sent a declaration to the Patriarch, in which they protested against the deceitful declaration abroad of Metropolitan Nikodim.

In April A. D. Zyryanova from the city of Belaya Kholunitsa (the twelfth of the signers of the "Open Letter") was put in an insane asylum, from which her sister took her out.

On May 31 in *Kirov Pravda* there was printed the article of S. Lyubovikov, "With an Open Visor," filled with slander and threats against the author of the "Open Letter," B. V. Talantov.

All persons who signed the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers" were subjected to threats and repressive measures, but they did not renounce their signatures or their agreement with the Letter.

Now the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers to Patriarch Alexis," broadcast on the BBC on December 8, 1966; *the declaration of Metropolitan Nikodim abroad concerning the anonymity and unauthenticity of this Letter, broadcast on the BBC on February* 25, 1967; *the pressure subsequently brought to bear by the organs of State Security (KGB) and the leadership of the Odessa*

Theological Seminary on the persons who signed this letter, with the aim of compelling them to renounce their signatures; finally, their firm support of this Letter, notwithstanding threats and repressive measures — all this constitutes irrefutable proof of the traitorous activity abroad of the Moscow Patriarchate and her secret cooperation with the atheists who hold power.

The documents confirming this are:

1. Tape recording of the BBC Radio broadcast of February 25, 1967. 2. The letter of B. V. Talantov to the Patriarch of March 19, 1967. 3. The declaration of N. N. Kamenskikh addressed to the Inspector of the Odessa Theological Seminary of May 19, 1967. 4. The letter of a group of Kirov believers to Patriarch Alexis of May 20, 1967. 5. The declaration of N. N. Kamenskikh addressed to Patriarch Alexis on June 19, 1967. 6. A copy of the certificate excluding N. N. Kamenskikh from the student-body of the Odessa Theological Seminary, of May 29, 1967, notarized. 7. The article of O. Lyubovikov, "With an Open Visor," in *Kirov Pravda* for May 31, 1967.

The Adaptation to atheism implanted by Metropolitan Sergius has concluded with the betrayal of the Orthodox Russian Church on the part of Metropolitan Nikodim and other official representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad. This betrayal, irrefutably proved by the documents cited, must be made known to all believers in Russia and abroad, because such an activity of the Patriarchate, relying on cooperation with the KGB, represents a great danger for all believers. In truth the atheistic leaders of the Russian people and the princes of the Church have gathered together against the Lord and His Christ.

The accusation by the whole people of the betrayal of the princes of the Church will inevitably lead to a crisis of the Church administration, but not to any kind of church schism, as certain ill-wishers of the Church affirm, as well as people who unconsciously follow them.

Believers must cleanse the Church of false brethren and false pastors (the betrayer-bishops and priests) in accordance with the commandment of the holy Apostle Paul: "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves." Only after such a cleansing is a true regeneration of the Church possible.*

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* I Corinthians 5:13.

LEAVEN OF HEROD

Many true believers of Russia have fervently prayed to God that He would show believers facts that would indisputably prove the secret betrayal by the bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church, if it exists. Now these facts, by God's mercy, are revealed to all who can really hear and see.

About a hundred years ago the Optina Elders predicted that a time would come when in Russia there would be impious bishops. Now this time has arrived. But because of the corruption and betrayal of the bishops the believers should not disperse to their homes and organize separate sects, but rather preserving unity, they should begin the accusation by the whole people of the corrupt false pastors and cleanse the Church of them.

August, 1967 *(Signature) B. V. Talantov*

EPILOGUE

Slanders and threats had a painful effect on the wife of B. V. Talantov, Nina Agafangelovna Talantova. As a result of her painful sufferings, and having suffered already for a long time from a hypertonic condition, on September 7 she had a stroke, and she died on December 16, 1967.

Agrippina Dimitrievna Zyryanova, the twelfth of the signers of the "Open Letter," died in a hospital on December 27, 1967. The threats hastened the approach of death. All those who signed the "Open Letter" suffered in one degree or another, but they did not renounce their signatures.

By the Ukase of Patriarch Alexis of June 6, 1967, the Inspector of the Odessa Theological Seminary, A. N. Kravchenko, was awarded the Order of Prince Vladimir, second degree (see the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate,* no. 8, 1967).

By decree of the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of April 4, 1967, the Rector of the Odessa Theological Seminary, Archimandrite Theodosius, was raised to the rank of bishop. By decree of the Holy Synod of October 7, 1967 (see *JMP,* no. 8, 1967), Bishop Vladimir of Kirov was assigned as Bishop of Berlin and Exarch in Central Europe, and by the Ukase of Patriarch Alexis of October 20, 1967, he was raised to the rank of Archbishop (see *JMP,* no. 11, 1967).

March 30, 1968 (*Signature*) *B. V. Talantov*

EDITORS' CONCLUSION: *On June* 12, 1969, *Boris Talantov was arrested, and on September* 3 *he was sentenced to two years in prison for "anti-Soviet activities." He died in prison on January* 4, 1971.

And thus it would seem, as the world judges, that evil triumphs. Boris Talantov and his courageous fellow-confessors are persecuted, suffer, and die; while for Metropolitan Nikodim not only has the "hour of judgment" not come, but his star seems still to rise. The Moscow Patriarchate gains new prestige and a new ally by its sponsorship of the "autocephaly" of the American Metropolia. And Orthodox Christians in America do not even suspect that they have become passive accomplices of a diabolic program of betrayal and anti-Christianity in the name of Orthodoxy.

But evil triumphs only in the eyes of men of little faith. "One cannot defend the Church by a lie." *The True Orthodox Christians of these last days are defeated on every hand*: *mocked by the world and by the betrayers of Orthodoxy, despised, persecuted. And yet for one thing they are unconquerable*: *they stand in the truth. And thus, as our God is Truth, their ultimate victory is certain. Only, may the "hour of judgment" come soon for the betrayers of Orthodoxy!*

(Metropolitan Nikodim, in fact, died suddenly in 1978 in Rome during an audience with Pope John Paul I, literally in the arms of the Pope, and the first prayers for his repose were performed by Roman Catholic clergy. His sudden death among those foreign to Orthodoxy, and who indeed seek to draw the Orthodox Church into another false "union", can only be interpreted by true Orthodox Christians as a proof of Metropolitan Nikodim's betrayal of Orthodoxy.)

35

Father Dimitry Dudko

Fr. Dimitry Dudko's activity in the past several years has been very much in the spirit of the Catacomb Church in its early years. We could cite his "suffering Orthodoxy," his apocalyptic awareness, and his veneration of the Tsar-martyr Nicholas II; further, his bold accusations against the betrayal of Orthodoxy by his own bishops have not been heard in Russia since the days of Metropolitan Joseph and other founders of the Catacomb Church in the late 1920's; and the fervor of his heartfelt Orthodoxy is so far from the dreary legalism of the Moscow Patriarchate that it can only be compared with that of the early martyrs of the Catacomb Church in Russia.

Let us see now what Fr. Dimitry himself has said about the Catacomb Church in Russia, about his own attitude to the "Sergianism" of the Moscow Patriarchate, and about his view of the church situation in general in Russia.

"We all recognize Patriarch Tikhon, and we look on Patriarch Sergius as a betrayal of the Church's interests to please the authorities. The following (Patriarchs)—Alexy and the present Pimen—only go on the road already opened. We have no other hierarchy. The Catacomb Church would be good—but where is it? The True Orthodox Church—these are good people, morally steadfast; but they have almost no priesthood and you simply can't find them, while there are many who are thirsting. And one has to be ministered to by the hierarchy we do have. Immediately the question arises: *are* they ministering to us? Basically, they are the puppets of the atheists. And another question: at least, are they believers? Who will answer this question? I fear to answer...

"One should say a few words about the so-called Tikhonites, the True Orthodox Christians. I have met them, rejoiced at their moral steadfastness, rejoiced even at their conservatism, rejoiced at their courage and asceticism; but I've taken a look at them, and they have no unanimity. And the chief thing about them: they have almost no priesthood, the leadership has been taken over by women dressed in black like nuns, who consider everyone to be heretics and only themselves infallible.

They should be put in a museum—and I speak without irony—in a museum where people could look at them and even learn something; but after all, life is not a museum. Some of the ''Tikhonites'' have begun to preach celibacy for everyone, but can everyone take this?

''Many of them suffer for years without communion. One such person came to me; I spoke with him, and he received communion. And you should have seen how he instantly came to life!

''And so, whether we wish or not, we must take into consideration the hierarchy which we have. What should we do?

''I think that, being together with everyone, we should strive to revive church life. But how? This question is like a nail driven into our brains. O Lord, have You really abandoned us?

''It is easy to observe from outside, but how difficult it is to do something—it is unbearable, impossible. But one *must* do something.

''The question stands thus: either live or perish.

''To perish is not the same thing as deciding the question abstractly. And you who try to draw a conclusion from the whole matter—do not take just one tendency for an example. I think that everyone now wants to find a way out; we're sick and tired of atheism, it has become repugnant even to the atheists.

''If possible, carefully support us—here I appeal to the West. Try not to remake us to somehow fit your own situation. The Russians have their own path. You can lure them into another one, but you will see that you will get no good from it.

''Each one goes on his own path. We are going on the path of Golgotha, a difficult one; such is God's will. If you support our cross—thank you. We need nothing more than this; we must find the way out ourselves. If we do this, perhaps we will have something new to say to you also'' *(Possev,* July, 1979, pp. 37-38).

No open-minded Orthodox Christian in the West can read such a statement—which comes from a deeply suffering Orthodox heart—without feeling great sympathy for Fr. Dimitry and all like him who are trying to find their way out of the literally unparalleled and impossible situation in which they find themselves within the Moscow Patriarchate and in an atheist society.

The situation of Fr. Dimitry in many respects is identical with that of those new-calendarist Greek priests who are aware of the false path of their own bishops but are unable to ''join the old calendarists'' because of the confusion and extremism to be found in their ranks (not, of course, among *all* old calendarists, but in enough of them to make the situation very confusing and difficult). Fr. Dimitry does not have the third alternative of ''joining the Synod''—although it is quite clear from his own statements that this is precisely what he would do if the choice were his (that is, if he were to be exiled to the West). Here, for example, are some of his words about the Russian Church Outside of Russia in one of his last tape-recorded talks before his arrest (Grebnovo, November, 1979):

''They have to preserve Tradition in the West. This is better and more convenient for them. Let it be that it is the 'old women' there, but they also can do much. We know *who* is pained over Russia, for whom Russia is dear, even if there may be among them some extreme views. . .

''I will say that I am very thankful to the Synodal Church Outside of Russia because it is most of all people from there that, when they come here, I feel they are 'mine'; it is so pleasant to speak with them. . .Perhaps not everyone in the Church Outside of Russia understands me, but for the most part they do understand. And I'm not offended! When people from the autocephalous American Church came, there were good talks; but I feel that they have a somewhat Western outlook. . .

''They tell me that I am of a Slavophile tendency. I acknowledge, of course, that I am really a Russian, a priest, and that I have a Russian attitude, without being separate from the Fullness of the Church. Both a 'Russian priest' and the 'Russian Church' are partial phenomena which must enter into the whole. But before me always and first of all is the *Church*. It is to the *Church* that I strive to bring people'' (*Vestnik* of the Western European Diocese of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, 1980, No. 16, p. 17).

In the Soviet Union, as nowhere else in the world, it is impossible to apply strict ''jurisdictional'' labels. In the Moscow Patriarchate there have been betrayer bishops, and the very principle of ''Sergianism'' is a betrayal of Orthodoxy, as Fr. Dimitry has said; this is why the free Russian Church Outside of Russia can have no communion with this jurisdiction. But in the same Moscow Patriarchate there is an increasing number of priests like Fr. Dimitry Dudko who do not participate in this betrayal, but speak in the spirit of the Catacomb Church and the free Russian Church Outside of Russia. We even know of at least one Catacomb priest (and probably there are others) who deliberately entered the Moscow Patriarchate in order to bring the grace of God to more people than is possible in the small cells of the Catacomb Church.

People cut off from the Catacomb Church also receive communion from priests of the Moscow Patriarchate whom they can trust (Fr. Dimitry has described one such incident), and we cannot condemn them for this. The Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, in view of all this, has decreed for all dioceses the commemoration at the Proskomedia of Fr. Dimitry and other imprisoned priests and laymen of the Moscow Patriarchate (Ukas No. 17 of January 16/29, 1980; see *The Orthodox Word*, 1980, No. 90, p. 2); and as zealous a hierarch as Archbishop Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo commemorated publicly at the Great Entrance of the Liturgy the newly-reposed hierarch of the Moscow Patriarchate, Archbishop Germogen, who ended his life in disgrace with the church authorities because he would not accept the dictation of the atheists.

None of this changes in the least our basic attitude towards Sergianism as a betrayal of the Church, nor does it allow us who are free to enter into communion with the Moscow Patriarchate. But it does persuade us that, far from viewing Fr. Dimitry and others like him (such as Boris Talantov ten years ago) as jurisdictional ''enemies'' because they do not ''join the Catacomb Church,'' we should try to understand better their extremely difficult situation and rejoice that such a genuine Orthodox Christian phenomenon is coming even from the midst of the compromised Moscow Patriarchate—a proof that church life is not dead even there and a promise that, once the political situation in Russia that produced ''Sergianism'' will have changed, a full unity in the faith will be possible with such courageous strugglers as Fr. Dimitry.

We do know that a Catacomb bishop showed his concern, from the other world, that Fr. Dimitry be ordained to the priesthood, even in the Moscow Patriarchate. This was Bishop Parthenius, a vicar of the Odessa diocese, who died in a concentration camp in the 1930's without recognizing Metropolitan Sergius. Once, in the difficult days of 1960 when Dimitry Dudko was despairing of ever being ordained (two years had passed since his graduation from the theological academy, and he was still regarded with suspicion by the church authorities as an ex-prisoner), the mother of his friend Gleb Yakunin had a dream: ''Bishop Parthenius was standing fully vested at the table of preparation and told her: 'I am taking out a small piece of prosphora for your Mitya (Dimitry)—on November 7 (20) he will be a deacon—and a large piece—on November 8 (21) he will be a priest.''' It happened as Bishop Parthenius had foretold, and from that time Fr. Dimitry has always commemorated this Catacomb bishop at the Liturgy as one of his own fathers in the faith. (A Levitin-Krasnov, in ***Russian Life***, Jan. 22, 1975.)

36

Lev Regelson

In 1977 there appeared the first published attempt from within Russia of a history and evaluation of the Russian Church since the Revolution of 1917 from a strictly Orthodox point of view (not as a mere apology for the Moscow Patriarchate). Written by a young layman of the Moscow Patriarchate, Lev Regelson, by its very title it views this period as *The Tragedy of the Russian Church, 1917-1945* (Paris, YMCA Press)—a period when the basic principles of the Church's life were sacrificed to the political aims of the Soviet gevernment, causing deep divisions within the Church.

While he attempts to be objective in his evaluation of the church events of this period, Regelson is against Sergianism and in basic agreement with the position of the first Catacomb hierarchs and their fight for the Church's freedom, although his own position is rather an attempt at a compromise between them. He places great emphasis on the decree of Patriarch Tikhon of November 7/20, 1920, which allowed the temporary independent existence of individual dioceses or groups of dioceses if contact was broken with the central church gevernment. This decree he sees as the foundation of Russian Church life in the revolutionary period, which in some respects has returned to the church life of the catacombs before Constantine the Great; and in fact this decree is the basis up to now of the gevernment of the Catacomb Church in Russia and the free Russian Church Outside of Russia. Regelson sees Metropolitan Sergius' attempt to preserve a church "center" at any cost (even if it is totally subservient to the atheist regime) as a fatal mistake which has largely produced the "tragedy of the Russian Church" today.

SERGIANISM

This book has more information about the hierarchs and documents of the Catacomb Church than any book published in the West, with the single exception of Protopresbyter Michael Polsky's *Russia's New Martyrs;* several of these documents have been used in the present volume. The book contains valuable biographical information on 38 of the "non-commemorating" bishops (those who separated from Metropolitan Sergius—Appendix III, pp. 559-608), and a major part of it is devoted to a "Chronology" of the church events from 1917 to 1945 (Appendix I, pp. 501-521). Here we present excerpts from this "Chronology" as it refers to the beginnings of the Catacomb Church from 1927 onwards (Regelson's sources for each item are indicated in the Russian original).

CHRONOLOGY

1927

From June to the end of the year

Massive transfers of hierarchs, forced retirement of exiled bishops,... assignment and consecration of former Renovationists and persons expressing agreement with the position of Metropolitan Sergius.

July 16/29

Epistle ("Declaration") of Metropolitan Sergius and the Temporary Patriarchal Synod under him concerning the relationship of the Russian Orthodox Church to the existing civil authority.

"Now our Orthodox Church in the (Soviet) Union has a central administration that is not only canonical, but also fully legal according to the civil laws; and we hope that the legislation will gradually spread also to our lower church administration: dioceses, etc....We wish to be Orthodox and at the same time acknowledge the Soviet Union as our civil homeland, whose joys and successes are our joys and successes, and whose failures are our failures. Every blow directed against the (Soviet) Union...is a blow directed against us."

July

Massive return of the "Declaration" by Orthodox parishes to Metropolitan Sergius as a sign of protest....In some dioceses (in the Urals) as many as 90% of the parishes sent the "Declaration" back.

August

Confirmation (legalization) of the church administration created by Metropolitan Sergius.

August

Exile of the severly ill Metropolitan Peter to a village in the Far North—120 miles from Obdorsk on the shore of the Bay of Oba.

August 31/Sept. 13

Decree of the Sergian Synod transferring Metropolitan Joseph to the See of Odessa.

Sept. 14/27

Response of the Solovki bishops to the "Declaration":

a. "The idea of the submission of the Church to civil laws is expressed in such a categorical and unconditional form as can easily be understood in the sense of a complete joining together of Church and State."

b. "The epistle offers the government 'the gratitude of all the people for its attention to the spiritual needs of the Orthodox population.' Such an expression of gratitude on the lips of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church cannot be sincere and therefore does not correspond to the dignity of the Church."

c. "The epistle of the Patriarchate accepts without any reservations the official version and lays on the Church the whole blame for the grievous clashes between the Church and State."

d. "The threat of interdiction of the emigrant clergy violates the decrees of the Sobor of 1917-1918 (Aug. 3/16, 1918), which explained the whole canonical inadmissibility of such punishments and rehabilitated all persons deprived of their clergy rank for political crimes in the past."

Sept. 15/28

Letter of Metropolitan Joseph to Metropoltan Sergius acknowledging as uncanonical his transfer to the See of Odessa.

Sept. 20/Oct. 3

Report of Bishop Nicholas (Yarashevich) of Peterhof concerning the disturbances in the Leningrad diocese in connection with the transfer of Metropolitan Joseph.

Sept. 29/Oct. 12

Decree of Metropolitan Sergius and the Synod reaffirming the transfer of Metropolitan Joseph to Odessa. Metropolitan Sergius takes the temporary administration of the Leningrad diocese upon himself.

Oct. 8/21

Ukase no. 549 of Metropolitan Sergius concerning the commemoration of the (civil) authorities and the removal of the commemoration of diocesan bishops who are in exile.

Oct. 17/30

Letter of Metropolitan Joseph to Metropolitan Sergius with his refusal to leave the Leningrad diocese.

October

Telegram of reply of Metropolitan Joseph to Metropolitan Michael (Ermakov) in connection with his transfer to the See of Odessa: "The transfer, which is anti-canonical, unconscionable, serving an evil intrigue, is rejected by me."

Oct. 22/Nov. 4

Letter of an Orthodox person to his friend (names unknown) concerning the latest events in church life:

"To anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear it is clear that, despite the decree of the separation of the Church from the State, the Orthodox Church has entered into an intimate, active union with the State. And with what a State?!—a State headed not by an Orthodox Tsar...but an authority which places as its fundamental aim the annihilation on earth of every religion, and first of all Orthodox Christianity..."

The author develops the idea that the events which are occurring are a prefiguration of the culminating apocalyptic events, on the basis of the prophecies of Bishop Theophan the Recluse concerning the future false Christs "who love the present world." "Although the name of Christian will be heard everywhere, and everywhere will be seen churches and church rites, all this will be only an appearance, while inwardly there will be a true apostasy. On this soil Antichrist will be brought forth, and he will grow in the same spirit of appearances."

The author writes of believers who "do not hasten with a final break with the church 'adulterers' in the hope that their conscience has not been entirely burned, and that therefore repentance and correction are possible."

November

Separation from Metropolitan Sergius and going over to self-government of the Diocese of Votkinsk and, in part, of Vyatka, headed by Bishop Victor. (See his life above on p. 140.)

November

Appearance of parishes in Leningrad not commemorating the name of Metropolitan Sergius at Divine services.

Nov. 29/Dec. 12

Interview of the Leningrad "Josephites," headed by Bishop Dimitry (Lyubimov) with Metropolitan Sergius. The "Josephites" made their appearance in the name of and at the instruction of eight bishops of the Leningrad diocese and of the clergy and academic circles of Leningrad. (See text of the interview above, p. 96.)

Protests against the "Declaration," the commemoration of the (civil) authorities at the Liturgy, the mentioning of the name of Metropolitan Sergius together with Metropolitan Peter, the prohibition of praying for exiles and prisoners, the creation of an uncanonical "Synod," and the personal composition of the "Synod."

December

Appeal to Metropolitan Sergius on behalf of the clergy and laymen of the Diocese of Leningrad by Archpriest-Professor Veryuzhsky concerning the causes of the disorders in the Church. Demands made of Metropolitan Sergius: to renounce the intended course of enslavement of the Church to the State; to renounce transfers and assignments of bishops apart from the agreement of the flock and the involved bishops themselves;...to return Metropolitan Joseph to the See of Leningrad; to remove the commemoration of the name of the Substitute (of the Locum Tenens, Metropolitan Sergius); to remove the prohibition of praying for exiled bishops and the prayer for civil authorities.

December

Reply of Metropolitan Sergius to Archpriest-Professor Veryuzhsky: Refusal to change the course of his "church policy."

Dec. 13/26

Act of separation from Metropolitan Sergius, signed by Bishop Dimitry of Gdov and Bishop Sergius of Narva ("For the sake of peace of conscience we renounce the person and deeds of our former Chief Hierarch, who has uncanonically and without limit exceeded his rights."–see text above, p. 101.)

December

Letter of Bishop Dimitry of Gdov to the clergy setting forth the grounds for his separation from Metropolitan Sergius ("The epistle ('Declaration' of Metropolitan Sergius) is beginning to show a powerful influence on purely ecclesiastical matters.")

Dec. 10/23

Decree of the Synod concerning Bishop Victor (Ostrovidov): He is given over to judgment by bishops, forbidden to serve, removed from governing.

Dec. 16/29

Second letter of Bishop Victor (Ostrovidov) to Metropolitan Sergius, protesting the new "Sergian policy." (Text above, p. 141.)

Dec. 17/30

Decree of Metropolitan Sergius and the Sergian Synod with an appeal for unity: "The canons of our Holy Church justify a break with one's lawful bishop or Patriarch only in one case: when he has already been condemned by a Council or when he begins to preach a known heresy which has also been condemned by a Council."

December ?

Epistle of "a certain bishop" concerning the reasons which allow a break with Metropolitan Sergius: "Departing from Metropolitan Sergius, the Orthodox Church can be governed by one of the elder hierarchs or, as occurred during the imprisonment of Patriarch Tikhon, each diocese can by governed independently by its own bishop."

1927

Non-participation in Sergian Divine services by the exiled Platon (Rudnev), Bishop of Bogorodsk, vicar of the Moscow diocese.

1928

Dec. 25/Jan. 7

Letter of Metropolitan Joseph to the "non-commemorators" of Leningrad, approving the actions of his vicars. "In order to condemn and make harmless the latest actions of Metropolitan Sergius, which are opposed to the spirit and good of the Holy Church of Christ, we have no other means, because of outward circumstances, than a decisive departure from him and an ignoring of his decrees."

Dec. 30/Jan 12

Letter of the former priest of the Moscow church of "Nicholas the Big Cross" on St. Elias Street, Archpriest Valentine Sventitsky, to Metropolitan Sergius, saying that he was breaking communion with Metropolitan Sergius, with the blessing of Bishop Dimitry of Gdov, preserving the commemoration of the name of Metropolitan Peter. (See text above, p. 208.)

Jan 4/17

Letter of Bishop Dimitry of Gdov, temporarily governing the diocese of Leningrad, to the priests (of the diocese). (See text above, p. 102.)

Jan. 9/22

Epistle of Bishop Alexis (Bui) of Kozlov, (temporarily) governing the Diocese of Voronezh, to the Orthodox clergy and laymen of the Voronezh Diocese, concerning his separation from Metropolitan Sergius. (Text above on p. 171.)

Jan. 12/25?

Decree of Metropolitan Sergius and the Sergian Synod concerning the "dissension-sowing activity and the creation of a schism and disturbances" by Bishop Dimitry (Lyubimov) and Bishop Sergius (Druzhinin). Bishop Sergius is suspended and removed, and the suspension of Bishop Dimitry is reaffirmed.

Jan. 13/26

Decree of Metropolitan Sergius and the Sergian Synod about the "schism," with an appeal to diocesan bishops to offer their ideas in connection with a future Local Council.

Jan. 13/26

Declaration by a group of clergy of the city of Serpukhov, headed by Bishop Alexis (Gotovtsev), of separation from Metropolitan Sergius.

Jan. 14/27

Decree of Metropolitan Sergius and the Sergian Synod with regard to the "dissension-sowing activity of Bishop Alexis (Bui)". He is given over to the judgment of bishops, forbidden to serve, and forcibly retired.

Jan. 17/30

Epistle of Metropolitan Sergius to the flock of Petrograd in connection with the "Josephite schism."

Jan. 24/Feb. 6

Letter of Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich, former Substitute of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, to Metropolitan Sergius, with an appeal for him to return to the path of truth. (Text above on p. 158.)

Jan. 24/Feb. 6

Appeal to Metropolitan Sergius from five bishops: Metropolitan Joseph, Archbishop Barlaam (Riashentsev) formerly of Perm, Bishop Eugene (Kobranov) of Rostov, informing of their separation from him and their refusal to acknowledge the right of him and his Synod to direct the Higher Church Administration.

Fundamental reason for their separation: "Considering it our sacred duty to guard the purity of the Holy Orthodox Faith and the freedom given us by Christ in the ordering of the inward religious life of the Church, in order to calm the disturbed conscience of the faithful, having no other way out of the fatal situation which has been created for the Church, we separate. . ." (See text above in Life of Archbishop Barlaam, p. 273.)

Jan. 26/ Feb. 8

Epistle of Metropolitan Joseph to the Leningrad vicar-bishops and to the pastors and faithful of Leningrad, informing them that he takes upon himself the leadership of the Diocese of Leningrad.

Jan. 28/Feb. 10

Letter of Metropolitan Sergius to Metropolitan Agathangelus with entreaty to preserve unity.

Feb. 1/14?

Letter of Metropolitan Joseph to Bishop Dimitry (Lyubimov) stating that 26 bishops had separated from Metropolitan Sergius.

Winter

Meeting in the town of Poloi (Krasnoyarsk region) of Metropolitan Cyril, going into exile, with Bishop Damascene (Tsedrick). They discuss church events and express personal friendship. Even before this Bishop Damascene had written about 150 private letters in connection with the "Declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius, sending them with his cell-attendant.

February

Exile of Archbishop Seraphim and Metropolitan Joseph out of the Yaroslav region to Mogilev and Ustiug respectively.

Feb. 28/ March 12

Epistle to pastors of Bishop Victor (Ostrovidov) in connection with the scandalous activity of Metropolitan Sergius. (Text above on p. 149.)

Feb. 20/March 4

Separation from Metropolitan Sergius, in the Diocese of Vyatka, of Bishop Nektary (Trezvinsky) of Yaransk and Bishop Hilarion (Belsky).

March 2?

Epistle of Metropolitan Joseph to the Leningrad flock, stating that the bishops of the Church of the Yaroslav region had separated from Metropolitan Sergius and that he, taking part in this, recognized thereby that the decrees of Metropolitan Sergius were null and void. (Text above, p. 125.)

March 14/27

Decree of the Sergian Synod suspending eight bishops: Metropolitan Joseph, Metropolitan Seraphim, and others (except for Metropolitan Agathangelus).

March 25/April 7

Letter of Metropolitan Agathangelus to Metropolitan Sergius concerning the latter's accusation of schism and request to re-examine his decision to separate. The accusations of schism are rejected, because "we do not separate from you out of a difference in faith, sacraments, and prayer, but only in the order of administrative government." Disagreement expressed over the attempt of Metropolitan Joseph to unite around himself all the opposition.

March 29/April 11

Decree No. 76 of Metropolitan Sergius and the Sergian Synod concerning "the disorders in the Diocese of Leningrad, Yaroslav, Vyatka, and Voronezh." The following bishops are given over to a judgment of bishops, are forbidden to serve, and forcibly retired: Metropolitan Joseph, Bishop Hierotheus (Afonik), Bishop Eugene (Kobranov), Archbishop Seraphim (Samoilovich), Archbishop Barlaam (Riashentsev). Last warning to Metropolitan Agathangelus, with threat of suspension.

April

Arrest and exile of Bishop Victor (Ostrovidov).

April 27/May 10?

Letter of Metropolitan Agathangelus, Bishop Eugene (Kobranov) of Rostov, and Archbishop Barlaam (Riashentsev), stating that they were not breaking off communion in prayer with Metropolitan Sergius, in principle did not deny his authority as Substitute of the Locum Tenens, were not causing a schism, but could not and cannot fulfill decrees that would disturb the religious conscience and, according to the conviction of the writers, violate the canons; they were not receiving into communion bishops, clergy, and laymen of other dioceses and were sending them to Metropolitan Sergius.

The lack of fulfillment of decrees was expressed first of all in the fact that Archbishop Barlasm and Bishop Eugene continued to occupy their sees, despite their removal by Metropolitan Sergius.

May

Open letter of Bishop Paul (Kratirov) of Yalta: "Concerning the modernized church, or Sergianist Orthodoxy."

June?

Epistle of Archbishop Seraphim (Samoilovich) from the Buinich Holy Spirit Monastery in the diocese of Mogilev, accusing Metropolitan

Sergius of the serious sin of "drawing our fainthearted and weak brethren into neo-renovationism."

June 8/21

Letter of Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky) from Solovki to private persons, condemning the actions of those who had separated from Metropolitan Sergius.

July 24/Aug. 6?

Letter of Metropolitan Joseph to Bishop Dimitry (Lyubimov) regarding the "reunion" of the Yaroslav group with Metropolitan Sergius. (The fundamental point in the position of the Yaroslav group—freedom to fulfill or not to fulfill the decrees of Metropolitan Sergius—remained unknown to Metropolitan Joseph and his partisans). Sharp expressions used against the Yaroslav bishops: "dissenters," "betrayers."

Oct. 3/16

Death of Metropolitan Agathangelus.

Nov. 28/Dec. 11

Prolonged discussion of Bishop Damascene (Tsedrick), returned from exile, with Metropolitan Sergius. Bishop Damascene wrote of this meeting: "If from afar I still supposed the possibility of facts which might justify his conduct, now these suppositions have been destroyed." "Innumerable and infinitely burdensome are the inward consequences of the Declaration—this selling of the primogeniture of the Truth for the lentil soup of lying and unrealizable goods."

1928?

Letter of the "spiritual elder," Father Vsevolod, concerning the disorders in the Church evoked by the Josephite opposition:

"Among us has occurred a division into two parts. One group stands for Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod, the other against. Both are wrong. Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod have issued an appeal in which they mix together church matters with politics and perform transfers of bishops against their will...

"Those who have come out with accusations against Metropolitan Sergius are correct; but their profound, totally unjustifiable mistake lies in the fact that they have broken off communion with him and even declare him a heretic and all those who are in communion with him to be without grace. . . .Therefore, the mutual interdictions of one and the other side have no power. . . .And you can freely go to churches of one or the other side, entreating the Lord to give canonical correctness in the relations between the Orthodox and to bring peace to His Church. One must not go only to evident schismatics: the renovationists, Gregorians, and Ukrainians. Fear these latter: they are without grace."

1929

1929

Arrest of fifteen bishops who had separated from Metropolitan Sergius:

1. Metropolitan Joseph of Leningrad—exiled to Ustiug in Novgorod province.
2. Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich—to Solovki.
3. Archbishop Barlaam (Riashentsev), formerly of Perm—to a Yaroslav prison.
4. Bishop Dimitry of Gdov—to a Leningrad prison.
5. Bishop Alexis (Bui) of Urazov—to Solovki.
6. Bishop Victor (Ostrovidov) of Vyatka—to Solovki.
7. Bishop Maxim (Zhizhilenko) of Serpukhov—to Solovki.
8. Bishop Athanasius (Molchanovsky) of Skvirsk—to Solovki.
9. Bishop Nektary (Trezvinsky) of Yaransk—exiled to Kazan.
10. Bishop Hilarion (Belsky)—to Solovki.
11. Bishop Paul (Kratirov) of Yalta—exiled to Kharkov.
12. Bishop Basil (Doktorov) of Kargopol—exiled, location unknown.
13. Bishop Sergius (Nikolsky)—exiled, location unknown.
14. Bishop Joseph (?), formerly of Birsk—exiled, location unknown.
15. Bishop Damascene (Tsedrick)—to a prison in Moscow.

The arrest of the bishops occurred in the following manner: The GPU agent came to the bishop and asked the following question: "What is your relation to the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius?" If the bishop replied that he did not recognize it, the agent concluded: "That means you are a counter-revolutionary." And the bishop was arrested.

May 2/15

First Epistle of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, addressed to the vicar of the Kazan diocese, Bishop Athanasius (Malinin), sent from Krasnoyarsk for the purpose of informing Metropolitan Sergius. Some fundamental points in it: "No Substitute in his rights can equal the one he replaces. . . .A basic change of the very system of church administration, which Metropolitan Sergius has ventured on, exceeds the competence even of the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne. . . .Until Metropolitan Sergius abolishes the Synod he has established, I cannot acknowledge as obligatory for fulfillment a single one of his administrative-church decrees."

May

Invitation of Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov) of Leningrad to Bishop Damascene (Tsedrick) to become his helper. Bishop Damascene refuses the offer.

Bishop Damascene organizes the sending of a courier to Metropolitan Peter in the village of Ho. The courier finds Metropolitan Peter completely sick and uninformed of church events. "Metropolitan Peter speaks of the situation and further conclusions from it in almost my own words," wrote Bishop Damascene. However, Metropolitan Peter gave no written reply to the courier (see his letter below, Feb. 13/26, 1930).

July 24/Aug. 6

Decree of Metropolitan Sergius and the Sergian Synod concerning their attitude to the sacraments performed by "schismatic" clergy. The separated Bishps (Metropolitan Joseph, Bishop Dimitry Lyubimov, Bishop Alexis Bui) are compared, being forbidden to serve, with renovationists. . . . Sacraments performed by them, apart from Baptism, are acknowledged as without efficacy.

Sept. 5/18

First letter of Metropolitan Sergius to Metropolitan Cyril (defending his own actions): "You have broken off eucharistic communion with us and at the same time do not consider either that you have caused a schism, or that we stand outside the Church. Such a theory is entirely unacceptable for church thinking—it is an attempt to keep ice on a hot grill." Appeal (to Metropolitan Cyril) to re-examine his position; threat of canonical sanctions.

Oct. 28-30/Nov. 10-12

Second letter ("Response") of Metropolitan Cyril to Metropolitan Sergius (see text above, p. 248, Epistle no. 3).

November

Arrest of Bishop Damascene (Tsedrick), who had been living in Starodub, at the accusation of the priest-overseer of Starodub, a zealous partisan of the "Declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius. Bishop Damascene is sent to Solovki. Before his arrest he wrote: "I am coming to the opinion that even a decisive word of Metropolitan Peter will not change the situation essentially.' At this period of his life in Starodub he accustomed his friends and followers to the idea that Christianity in Russia would be forced to go underground. All possibility for influencing the broad strata of society had been lost.

1930

Dec. 20/Jan. 2

Second letter of Metropolitan Sergius to Metropolitan Cyril, ending with a deadline (Feb. 2/15, 1930) for Metropolitan Cyril to express canonical obedience and refuse communion with the "schismatics"; from this date will take effect the giving over of Metropolitan Cyril to the judgment of a Council of Bishops and his removal from the governance of the Kazan diocese.

Feb. 5/18

Interview of foreign correspondents with Metropolitan Sergius; facts given on the situation of the Patriarchal Church: About 30,000 parishes, many more priests (one to three for a parish), 163 bishops "in canonical submission to the Patriarchate". . . (Such "facts," of course, were totally imaginary, invented to mask the persecution of the Church, which by this time had closed thousands of churches and decimated the clergy.)

Feb. 8/21

Arrest of Bishop Alexis (Bui) of Kozlov.

Beginning of 1930

Departure of Bishop Amphilochius (Skvortsov) of Enisei and Krasnoyarsk, under the influence of conversations with Metropolitan Cyril, into the Siberian forests, where he founded a skete.

Beginning of 1930

Separation from Metropolitan Sergius of Bishop Sinesius (Zarubin) of Izhevsk.

1930

Arrest of Bishop Sergius (Druzhinin) of Narva, who had headed the Josephite opposition.

Feb. 13/26

Letter of Metropolitan Peter from the village of Ho to Metropolitan Sergius; the letter states that it is in addition to a letter sent earlier (which evidently did not reach the addressee):

"I have constantly thought that you should be a refuge for all truly-believing people. I acknowledge that of all the distressing news that I have had to receive, the most distressing were the reports that many believers remain outside the walls of the churches in which your name is commemorated. I am filled with pain of soul over the disputes that are arising around your governance, as well as over other sad events. Perhaps these reports are prejudiced; perhaps I am not sufficiently acquainted with the character and the aspirations of those who write me. But reports of spiritual disturbances come from various places, and primarily from clergy and laymen who are putting strong pressure on me.

"In my opinion, in view of the extraordinary conditions of the Church's life, when the normal rules of administration are subjected to every kind of fluctuation, it is essential to place church life on the path on which it stood during your first period as Substitute. And so, be so good as to return to that course of yours, which was respected by everyone. Of course, I am far from the idea that you will decide to renounce altogether the fulfillment of the obedience that has been laid upon you—this would not serve for the good of the Church. I repeat that I am greatly grieved that you did not write me and inform me of your intentions. If letters come to me from others, undoubtedly yours also would get through. I write you frankly, as to the Archpastor closest to me, to whom I am obliged for much in the past, and from whose hierarchal hands I received the tonsure and the grace of priesthood."

May 24/June 4

Prohibition to serve laid upon Bishop Senesius (Zarubin) of Izhevsk for cutting off canonical communion with Metropolitan Sergius.

1930

Meetings in exile of Archpriest M. Polsky with the "non-commemorating" Archbishop Seraphim (Zvezdinsky) and other "non-commemorators." "Archbishop Seraphim celebrated services at night in a remote village, and faithful people came to him even from far-away places. . . .I myself, after abandoning my exile, travelled about Russia illegally and had offers from friends to become a glass-maker or stove-maker and with such a profession to visit the houses of the faithful" (i.e., in order to serve secretly as a priest).

1931

April

Closing of the church of the Holy Martyrs Cyrus and John in Moscow; a parish of "non-commemorators," its priest was Fr. Seraphim Bityugov.

Beginning of April

Closing, on the eve of the Annunciation, of the church of St. Nicholas on Maroseik St.: a parish of "non-commemorators;" its priest was Fr. Sergei Mechev.

1931

Appearance of the first issue of the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate." (It contained justifications for Metropolitan Sergius' position.)

(The year 1932 saw decrees of Metropolitan Sergius' Synod, announced in the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate," exalting his dignity as first hierarch of the Russian Church, and raising other members of the Synod to the rank of Metropolitan.)

1933

July 15/28

Letter of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan to Metropolitan Sergius, continuing his protest against the latter's course of action ("Having reached the age. . ." See text, p. 250).

August

Return to Vladimir from exile of Bishop Athanasius (Sakharov); he remains in freedom until April 18, 1936.

September

Letter of Bishop Athanasius to Bishop Innocent of Vladimir, accusing Metropolitan Sergius of assuming the rights of Chief Hierarch and announcing his own separation from Metropolitan Sergius in accordance with the Patriarchal Ukase of Nov. 7/20, 1920.

1933

Closing of the last church in Moscow of "non-commemorators": the church of the Serbian Metochion on Solyanka St.

1933

Development of illegal activity by clergy. Testimony of an atheist brochure: "The movable priest has now become a quite ordinary figure in many districts. The enterprising priest puts in a little bundle all the essential cult property and—from village to village, from bazaar to bazaar—travelling on horseback, he performs religious services on demand, not allowing believers to forget about God. Believing laborers, if they believe in God and desire to perform Divine services, have officially registered churches for this purpose. But religious organizations are going underground. . .in recent years in a whole series of locations, for example in Western Siberia, in the Central Black Sea area, in the Urals, the northern Caucasus, etc. A prayer house is organized somewhere in a private dwelling, underground, where entrance is accessible only to a limited number of persons and there is no control on the part of the authorities."

1934

January

Letter of Metropolitan Cyril in reply to the opinion of someone regarding the necessity of declaring himself Locum Tenens until the release of Metropolitan Peter (see p. 253, Epistle no. 4).

March-July 16

Metropolitan Cyril remains free in the city of Gzhatsk, actively engaged in organizing "non-commemorators"—i.e., those who do not recognize Metropolitan Sergius as chief Hierarch and govern themselves according to Patriarch Tikhon's Ukase of November 7/20, 1920.

1934

Bishop Damascene (Tsedrick) is freed from Solovki and is active in organizing "non-commemorators."

April 14/27

Metropolitan Sergius is given, by the Sergian Synod and the bishopo joined to it (21 bishopo in all) the title: "Most Blessed Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomensk," with the right of wearing two panagias.

1934

Clergy continue to celebrate secret Divine services. A letter from a priest of the Kazan diocese states: "I finished my exile and, returning to my native place, did not receive a parish. The only thing left for me was to wander from village to village where there were no churches, and for a piece of bread or a night's lodging perform Divine services. Many priests like myself, with bundles on their shoulders, go from village to village, offering to perform the Divine services. Many people chase us away, mock us, but many receive us, feed us, give us shelter, ask us to serve. We serve everything, including Liturgy. For performing the services we carry in our bundles an antimension, a container with the Holy Gifts, incense, a censer, church wine, and the simplest vestments. And so we carry a whole altar on our shoulders. Most frequently of all people ask us to serve panikhidas."

1936

1936

Closing of the last church in Leningrad of "non-commemorators"—the church of the Tikhvin Mother of God on Lesnoi St. Before this the church of the Resurrection on the Blood, the cathedral of St. Nicholas, the cathedral of St. Vladimir, and others had been closed.

Dec. 14/27

"Decree of the transfer of the rights and obligations of the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne of the Orthodox Russian Church to the Substitute of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, the Most Blessed Metropolitan Sergius. . .in connection with the death in exile of Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, which occurred on Aug. 29/Sept. 11, 1936."

(But note this quote from an article of Metropolitan Sergius in 1931: "Once the Locum Tenens leaves his post (from death, resignation, etc.), in that very moment the authority of his Substitute ceases.")

1937

1937 and later

Secret activity of "non-commemorators" continues. Witnesses who later escaped abroad were able to find in 1938 in Moscow the Catacomb Church of the "Josephites." At a certain N.N's apartment, 30 or 40 people gathered. A priest served. To gain entrance, one had to knock at a water-pipe with a certain signal. The people of this secret church had contact with higher spiritual leaders, elders, whose dwelling place wes carefully concealed. They lived somewhere in the country and constantly changed places. . . .In the remote regions of Soviet Russia lived pious people who had renounced the Sergianist churches. The Holy Gifts were sent to them from various centers in parcels, for example, in boxes of candy."

1939

Continuation of the secret activity of the "non-commemorators." Non-commemorating priests perform services for believers who had not separated from Metropolitan Sergius, but remained without churches and clergy.

SERGIANISM

The magazine *Atheist*, on April 21, 1939, in an article called "A Church in a Suitcase," said: Travelling priests who have been banished from parishes by the NKVD "have all necessary appurtenances for the performance of rites in a suitcase. If they have to help people in the kitchen, they do it; they buy groceries for the sick."

V

The Catacomb Church in Recent Years

Is a candle brought to be put
under a bushel, or under a bed?
and not to be set on a candlestick?
For there is nothing hid which shall
not be made manifested; neither was
any thing kept secret, but that it
should come abroad. If any man have
ears to hear, let him hear.
(Mark 4:21-23)

37

A Catacomb Epistle of 1962

BY A MEMBER OF THE MUCH-SUFFERING
CATACOMB CHURCH OF RUSSIA

Editor's Introduction

Until the 1970's, virtually all of our first-hand information on the Catacomb Church in Russia came from the documents of its founding bishops (see Part II above) and the testimonies of Catacomb believers who came out of Russia chiefly during World War II (Part III). Thus, this information is restricted to the period from 1927 to the early 1940's, and about the Catacomb Church from 1940 to 1970 almost nothing was known.

In the 1970's, with a new wave of emigration and increased communication between Russia and the outside world, the veil to some extent has been removed. The following texts, all from witnesses in Russia itself, give most of what is publicly known about the Catacomb Church in the years since the Second World War.

The first text, although dated 1962, was printed only in 1977 in Lev Regelson's *Tragedy of the Russian Church* and before then was known only to a few persons within the Soviet Union. Its anonymous author is a conscious (but moderate) apologist for the Catacomb Church, which maintains its existence separate from the Moscow Patriarchate up to the present day.

THE CATACOMB CHURCH

Dear Children,

You ask for a clarification of one and the same subject. It would be best of all to speak of this at a personal meeting, but unfortunately, I will have to write with the risk of not answering some of your perplexities.

THE SOVIET WAR AGAINST THE CHURCH

When they came to power, the Bolsheviks immediately declared war against the Church. This was, if you please, the only honest act in all their political activity, for any agreement between these two camps was unthinkable as a consequence of the contradictions which divide them (what communion is there of Christ with Belial?); and there can be no talk at all of toleration on the part of the Bolsheviks. But with the very declaration of war their honesty came to an end, for they set forth false motives. They immediately began to accuse the Church of counter-revolution. This was clearly an injustice, because from the time when the Bolsheviks became entrenched on the whole territory of former Rus- and the civil war came to an end, that is, from the time when it became clear to everyone to whom the governmental authority belonged, the Bolsheviks could not indicate a single *fact* which would come under this concept – the concept of political warfare, conspiracy, with the aim of annihilating the adversary. But they began to persecute Christians precisely under this false pretext. And when my turn came, at one of my interrogations, I declared to my interrogator: "Yes, I am a counter-revolutionary; I do not deny it. Whenever you say 'yes', I say 'no'; whenever you say 'white', I say 'black'; whenever you praise, I sharply condemn. But you have no right to persecute me for this. since you have proclaimed freedom of religion. Consequently, my religious convictions, according to your own laws, are not a crime. And you cannot in the least accuse me of political warfare with you, of acts which have as their aim to call forth your annihilation." And despite the fact that he really could not bring forth an accusation of a single counter-revolutionary act against me, I was still "condemned" without any trial to ten years.

CATACOMB EPISTLE, 1962

In the beginning the Bolsheviks were quite naive. It seemed to them that the chief power of the Church was to be found in its material might. Under the pretext of helping the hungry, they promoted the so-called "confiscation of Church valuables," from which not a single kopeck went to the hungry, and all the metal was used not for the buying of goods, but for the making of coins to support the fantastically devaluated Soviet ruble. But against all their expectations, the Church continued to stand, and her light even became a little purer and clearer. Being liberated from an obligation foreign to her – to defend and support the far from ideal (from her point of view) and therefore transitory governmental and social order, the Russian Church went over finally to the realization of her eternal aim: the grace-giving renewal and rebirth of human souls.

Then came a few years which everyone who experienced them in the enclosure of the Church can remember only with a feeling of great spiritual joy and fervent thanksgiving to God, Who vouchsafed them to experience what they did. There were confessors, there were martyrs, there were persecutions, annihilations, and mockeries. But this did not decrease the joy, for all this was endured not in the name of attaining any kind of earthly aims, but only in the name of Christ – only in His name. The Church, absolutely defenseless, felt itself to be both correct and unvanquishable. Clearly, life itself proved the rightness of the idea of St. John Chrysostom that, just as the enemies could do nothing with the Lord Jesus Christ and His Disciples as long as there was not found a traitor among them, so also no persecutions from outside are frightful to the Church, as long as there are no traitors among the shepherds. And, alas, such traitors were found.

The Soviet authorities managed to find certain hierarchs who did not consider it an abomination to step forth, one after the other, in the role of Judas Iscariot. At first it was the "Living Church," the "Renovationists," then the "Gregorians," the "Lyubentsi," and many others. Their attempts to give over the rudder of the canonical administration of the Church into the hands of her sworn enemies, and thereby to distort or even completely paralyze her influence upon the spiritual life of the country, were fruitless until Metropolitan Sergius became the substitute of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, after the arrest of a whole series of bishops who had occupied this position...

THE DECLARATION OF METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

And then, it seems it was in May, 1927, his Declaration was published. You have probably read it, therefore I don't need to set it forth in detail. One can only say that in it Metropolitan Sergius fulfilled not those promises which he had given to his brothers in faith, but those which had been demanded of him at the NKVD. A great disturbance arose. On the one hand, everyone felt that a believing Orthodox Christian could not agree with a single word of this Declaration, that it, if not formally, then in essence, was apostate in nature, declaring principles which are incompatible with the Christian consciousness and conscience. But on the other hand, it was precisely this open trampling upon Church justice that tore souls with a burning doubt. The thought arose, "It cannot be that Metropolitan Sergius decided on something which seems to us so unworthy, not only of a hierarch, but even of a simple Christian. Probably it is our excessive rigorism, our pride, that paints in such dark colors a sober and wise action of Metropolitan Sergius, who is respected by everyone and is a highly valued archpastor."

It was tormenting and difficult to decide. In the end, one part of the hierarchs and the ordinary clergy, with great pain of soul, decided that ... the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius was absolutely unacceptable for them, that it would bring frightful misfortunes to the Orthodox Church, that those joyful perspectives which Metropolitan Sergius promised in case his Declaration should be accepted - all the way to the opening of theological schools and permission for the Church to print its own publications -- would never be realized. And since Metropolitan Sergius at the end of the Declaration offered to all those who were not in agreement to "depart" until they became convinced of the rightness and the successfulness of his course, they therefore "departed," cutting off communion with him and with everyone who submitted to him.

At the same time, there was no question among those who departed concerning whether those who followed Metropolitan Sergius had grace or not: this question they did not ask and did not decide. But the sharpness of the church battle led many among *the simple church people* to declarations that grace had been taken away from the followers of Metropolitan Sergius, that their sacraments were not sacraments, and that attending their churches defiled a Christian and made him an apostate. These views became especially widespread when, soon after the publication of the Declaration, the flock began quickly to be deprived of its shepherds and archpastors, who went into exile, prisons, and concentration camps. But the hierarchs who led tbe departure from Metropolitan Sergius, as well as the clergy close to them, taught only that in this year of great disturbance and division, it was fitting to attend only those churches where the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius was not read, and where he was not commemorated, *as a sign of the fact that they rejected the impious deeds of Metropolitan Sergius and his partisans.* These partisans of his turned out to be much more numerous than those who departed. Here, the reasons were both the great authority of Metropolitan Sergius and faint-heartedness – the fear of repressions, and the hope that one could escape them by going on the path to which Metropolitan Sergius called.

Soon the ruinous consequences of this ''direction'' were not slow in making themselves known. Into the concentration camps, after those who had ''departed,'' there soon followed also all those who had hoped to be saved under Metropolitan Sergius' omophorion. Churches and monasteries were quickly closed, one after the other, and, ten years after the Declaration which had promised the Church ''a quiet and undisturbed life,'' over the whole limitless expanse of the USSR there remained only *a few churches* in the large cities, and these were called ''show churches.'' There remained still Metropolitan Sergius and the Synod unlawfully organized by him – about fifteen bishops ready to do anything, among whom was also the future Patriarch of All-Russia, Alexis Simansky.*

THE OPENING OF THE CHURCHES

And so would everything have continued if the war had not occurred. In the areas occupied by the Germans there immediately began an elemental building of churches. The defiled but still whole churches were opened, cleaned, and consecrated, and wherever they had been destroyed there were organized houses of prayer. To these the believers brought the holy antimensia, icons, vessels, and all kinds of church furnishings which they had preserved in a holy way. Crowds of thousands again came to the churches, again they heard the word of God, again they received communion of the Bloodless Sacrifice. All this could not but be reflected in the areas which still remained under the power of Stalin. He understood that a continuation of the previous church policy could turn out to be extremely dangerous for him, and, determined not to be behind Hitler in piety, he commanded Metropolitan Sergius, who was obedient to him in everything, again to open those churches the closing of which he (Metropolitan Sergius) had justified not long before this, many times declaring to the whole world that there were no persecutions whatever in the USSR, and that churches were closed because the parishioners were petitioning for this, having decided that they did not need any church.

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* **Actually, at its lowest state in 1940, the Moscow Patriarchate had only four bishops at freedom. The fifteen bishops who elected Sergius "Patriarch" in 1943 were quickly gathered from prisons and concentration camps at that time.**

And so, the "new era" began, Churches were opened, fifteen bishops, with the permission of Stalin, made Metropolitan Sergius Patriarch, or Com-patriarch, as the Germans justly called him in their newspapers. The newly-baked Patriarch began feverishly to increase the number of his bishops, bringing them up in the short period of his Patriarcate to fifty and more souls, of course all thinking exactly like him. Even the boldest dreams were realized: several seminaries and two Academies were opened, and permission was given for the publication of the Journal of the Patriarchate. However, the reason for all this "blossoming" was, clearly, not the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, but something which for its existence owed nothing whatever to Metropolitan Sergius: the invasion of Hitler, which was so successful in the beginning.

That this change of church policy was not sincere, but was made only under compulsion, is shown by the later practice of the Party which has as its aim to liquidate the Orthodox Church before the end of the present seven-year plan.* The reaction of Patriarch Alexis to this practice is not different in a single iota from the reaction of Metropolitan Sergius to the destruction of Church organizations in the 1930's. It is just as shameless and criminal, and it has no justification whatever.

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* The persecution of Khrushchev, 1959-1964.

CATACOMB EPISTLE, 1962

OUR POSITION TODAY

Are we correct affirming this, and on this basis continuing to remain outside of communion with the hierarchy which is headed by Patriarch Alexis?

Absolutely we are correct. Is not the Orthodox Church given over to the torrent and pillaging of her sworn enemies? Who, in actual fact, is directing the Church with autocratic authority? Is it not the local and district officials, headed by their chief, Kuroyedov? Do they not interfere in all the petty details of church life, striving, of course, not to put the Church in order, but to do as much harm as possible to it? Has not the whole episcopate been turned into an empty decorative screen which covers with its splendid appearance the dark work of mocking the holy things of the faith? Have not certain bishops gone so far that they themselves come to close monasteries instead of defending them? (This I saw with my own eyes.) Do not the officials dare to demand of priests not to allow children into church, not to confess them or give them communion? Do not the delegations, which are sent by Patriarch Alexis to all possible church conferences, condemn anti-communism as a teaching incompatible with Christianity, at the same time that Communism itself without any embarrassment at all, declares itself anti-Christian? Thus, every lack of approval, every condemnation and ideological battle against anti-Christianity, according to the new Sergian-Alexian doctrine, is declared to be a work unworthy of a Christian; and on the contrary, union with the enemies of Christ, participation and cooperation with them, and not only a silent but often a very loud approval of their destructive and persecuting activity (for example, "Stalin is the first guardian of Orthodoxy") – this is the direct duty of every Christian.

And Patriarch Alexis acts in complete agreement with this unbelievable doctrine of his. For example, he hastens to reproach Kennedy for the renewal of nuclear tests, but he stubbornly remains silent not only when Khrushchev does the same, but even when this "peace-maker," nakedly trampling not only on the rights of men, but even on his own Soviet laws, destroys the Church. Even Metropolitan Nicholas of Krutitsa, a spirited and bold apologist for the Church's "new economic plan," was unable to contain himself, and he preferred disgrace; but our Holiness, just as before, as if nothing had happened, participates in the receptions and congresses, applauds, and so forth.

"This is the way everything is," people will tell me. "But have you not violated the church canons which forbid clergy to cease communion with their Metropolitans and Bishops before a conciliar judgment?" This is an argument that seems very weighty. But let us examine it. And first of all let us ask: Do we have periodic (once every year and once every three years) councils where we might appeal? After all, according to the canons, these councils are an obligatory church institution. It turns out that our accusers are *the first violaters* of the canons, and they compel us also not to observe them. After all, one cannot accuse us of "separating before a council," if these councils in general are not even called! They will say, "For the past twenty years there were councils and conferences." But what kind? These were conferences of 'yes-men' who obediently stamped the orders, first of Karpov and then of Kuroyedov. And after all, *the canons forbid* any kind of pressure of the civil authority on the members of a council, and all the decrees of bishops which have been compelled by such pressure are declared to be invalid.

Again our accusers, passing themselves off as defenders of canons, turn out to be their violators. The constant picture is this: if one judges by the reality of things, they are lawless ones and criminals; if one judges formally, they are the keepers of canonical order in the Church. But even this pitiful consolation exists only for a very superficial investigation. But if one looks more carefully, it is discovered that they have no right whatever to insist upon their canonicity; for there exists a canon according to which every clergyman, whether priest or bishop, who has attained his rank by the influence, insistence, or in general by any kind of pressure or help of the civil authority, *must be cast out of his rank.* According to this canon, not to speak of the present bishops who cannot even put on an omophorion until Kuroyedov allows it, the Patriarch himself should be cast out of his rank – he who was "elected" by a council at the direct order of the government. Behold how "canonical" the whole hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church is!...

I will be told: "It is in Metropolitan Sergius's favor that a series of bishops returned to him who had previously departed from him." No, my dear children, this fact does not at all incline the scales to his side. I have already said what a great disturbance Metropolitan Sergius called forth in our minds and hearts, how difficult it was to discern and to decide. You cannot imagine how difficult this was, how we suffered and were tormented. It is not astonishing that there have been waverings and changes of decision. Their motives we do not know, but they could be quite various: not only the conclusions of logic, but simply great weariness, or something else like this. One bishop told me directly: "I will tell you frankly, everything that Metropolitan Sergius does is a vile disgrace. But I wish finally to return home!" (But he did not remain very long at home.)

Everything that has been said above, I hope, will convince you that it is not out of lightmindedness or prejudice that we have made our choice, and it is not out of lightness of mind and stubbornness that we do not change it. We have made it to the best of our judgment, and we are ready to stand with it at God's judgment. There are very few of us, but we do have an Orthodox episcopate – and not only the one abroad – and our conscience is at peace.

We believe that if human life is to continue on earth, then sometime there will gather a council which will justify our boldness and will justly evaluate the "wise policy" of Metropolitan Sergius and his followers who wished to "save the Church" at the price of her immaculateness and truth.

WHAT TO DO?

Now, your basic question: *What are you to do?* If the present days were like the days of the Sergianist disturbance, I would tell you what I said then: Go to churches which do not have communion with Metropolitan Sergius, but do not go to him and his partisans. But the times have changed. We have no churches in the USSR now, and can we, who have gone into our solitary cells and find there everything which the churches gave us, forbid the thousands of believers *who do not have such an opportunity* from seeking consolation and spiritual food in the churches that do exist, and can we condemn them because they go there? We cannot imitate those ignorant ones who stupidly affirm: "Those are not churches, they are demons' temples, those who attend them defile themselves and are deprived of saving grace," and other such foolish sayings.

And so I say to you: If you do not have any other way of taking part in Divine services and receiving the Mysteries, if you are languishing with thirst for church unity and prayer, *and if attending the churches gives this to you* – then go there without disturbance, and do not fear that this will be a sin. The Spirit breathes where It will; and in His unutterable mercy the Lord, even through His most unworthy ministers, even through unbelievers, does not deprive Christians of His heavenly gifts. If you wish a more intimate personal communion, then I advise you, as I also told you before, to choose for this sincere and unhypocritical priests – and such do exist in the churches. Of course, it is difficult for them, but they somehow try to squeeze through the eye of the needle. To seek such people among the bishops is almost a hopeless cause: the overwhelming majority of them "know what they are doing," and now are especially justified the words of St. John Chrysostom, "I fear no one in the world. I fear only bishops."

And so, here, it seems, is everything that I needed to say to you, children. Yes, one thing more: Do not think that if you begin to attend the churches and even confess and receive communion in them, that I will consider you strangers. My soul is always open for you while you have the desire to be in communion with it.

With love in Christ...

1962

38

Russia and the Church Today

TWO CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTS OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH IN THE USSR

TRANSLATORS' INTRODUCTION

When during the last two years the articles of Boris Talantov on "Sergianism" became known in the West, the depth of the crisis which is currently being undergone by the Moscow Patriarchate was revealed to the world. In these articles the Church consciousness of a most sensitive thinker within the Patriarchate itself came to the very bounds of "schism" — to a point just one logical step short of rejecting the Patriarchate itself and acknowledging that the true Russian Church is not to be found in the Patriarchate at all, but in the so-called "Josephite schism" of 1927, in what is popularly called the "Catacomb Church." After reading Talantov's reflections on "Sergianism," some Orthodox believers in the West began to wonder and to hope: what if Talantov or someone else in the Patriarchate were to follow his reflections on "Sergianism" to their logical conclusion? Or, alternatively, what if someone in the Catacomb Church itself were to speak out and make known the authentic voice of Russian Orthodoxy today, uncompromised by even the slightest taint of "Sergianism"?

This latter alternative, under the conditions of Church life in the Soviet Union today, was almost unthinkable. By the very nature of the Catacomb Church its members do not take part in the movement of religious protest by signing petitions for the opening of churches and the like—because the very existence of their churches is illegal and secret. More profoundly, they do not write criticisms of this or that aspect of the activity of the Moscow Patriarchate, as did Talantov, the Moscow priests, and others — because they reject the Patriarchate altogether and thus have no interest in merely "reforming" it. They do not sign their names to documents of any sort, for that would betray not only themselves, but also numbers of their fellow secret believers.

THE CATACOMB CHURCH

And yet, by God's great mercy, the "unthinkable" has now happened. The two documents here printed are direct documents of the Catacomb Church, the first such documents to appear since the epistles of the Josephite bishops in 1927-29. The authors, of necessity, are anonymous; but the language and the content of the documents make it clear that they were not written by any ordinary believers, but rather by theologians who are very likely priests or bishops of the Catacomb Church. The importance of the documents can scarcely be overestimated. From Soviet and emigre sources alike the mere existence of the Catacomb Church can be documented through all the years from 1927 to the present; but these are the first sources in over four decades to give the actual *voice* of the Catacomb Church from inside the USSR.

The main theological-ecclesiastical point of these documents is a repetition of the argument of Metropolitan Joseph and the other bishops who protested the "Declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927: that Sergianism, even if it does not change dogmas, canons, or rites, has done something far worse in perverting the very nature of the Church, thus sinning against her internal freedom and placing itself *outside the Church of Christ.*

But beyond this basic point — which reveals that the thought of the Catacomb Church has not at all changed in 45 years — the present documents offer an invaluable commentary on Church life today in the Soviet Union. As the documents themselves state, they are an "eyewitness testimony" of religious life in the Soviet Union, and they bring up such crucial matters, rarely if ever discussed elsewhere, as the position of the Moscow hierarchs in relation to ordinary believers; the attitude of the latter toward the hierarchs and toward the sermons they hear in Patriarchate churches; the decline of Church consciousness among ordinary believers, leading sometimes to a "magical" view of the sacraments; the fact and the difficulties of "converts" to Orthodoxy today in the USSR; the Church as organization versus the Church as organism, the Body of Christ; the essential "catacombness" of all genuine religious life in the Soviet Union, whether inside or outside the Patriarchate; and the perversion by the Patriarchate of Christian virtues such as humility in order to use them for political ends and crush believers *in the name of Orthodoxy.* In exposing many of the sad results of the Sergianist concordat of 1927, these documents do not appear as merely another of the recent protests against the Patriarchate; they belong to a different dimension, and in a sense they are more "objective" than any protests from within the Patriarchate could be: they represent the free and independent voice of the authentic Russian Church, which can look on the whole Russian Church situation and on the betrayer hierarchs of the Patriarchate calmly and without bitterness for the simple reason that it does not regard them as Orthodox. But at the same time there is no note whatever of "fanaticism" or "sectarian" mentality in these documents, which regard the Patriarchate as fallen, perverted, and outside the Church, but not yet as entirely beyond hope of deliverance; and they look to the future All-Russian Council, after the fall of the Communist Yoke, for the restoration of normalcy to the Russian Church.

Finally, and perhaps most important for Orthodox Christians outside of Russia, the authors view the Russian Church situation not in isolation, but in the context of the situation of world Orthodoxy. They view the Communist Yoke as a prefiguration of the reign of Antichrist, and the battle between Russian Orthodoxy and Anti-Christianity as merely the central point of a struggle which is world-wide. Boris Talantov had come to a similar conclusion when he branded the Moscow Patriarchate as "a secret agent of world-wide Anti-Christianity." And indeed, no sensitive observer can fail to notice that the basic position of Orthodoxy in the USSR which these documents reveal is different from the situation outside of Russia chiefly in degree rather than in kind. Many of the basic problems are the same: the profound ignorance of what Orthodoxy is, the political and other influences which enter Church life and attempt to swerve the Church from her spiritual path, the weakening of the spirit of confession; the basic difference is only that the Orthodox Churches of the free world *voluntarily* follow the path of apostasy which is followed in the Soviet Union under coercion. The true Orthodox Christians of the free world, in a profound sense, are already a "Catacomb Church" as against the official apostate bodies that are everywhere recognized as "Orthodox."

The two documents were illegally circulated (in *samizdat*) in the Soviet Union in the spring of 1971 and came abroad in several copies (the two documents always together) which were received by the *Possev* publishing house in Frankfort am Main, by Radio Liberty in Munich, and by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The translation presented here has been made from the Russian texts circulated in April of this year by *Possev*. The two titles and all parentheses, italics, and footnotes are as in the original, except where a "translators' note" is specifically indicated.

38

Russia and the Church Today

With time faith will decline in Russia. The glitter
of earthly glory will blind the reason: the word of truth
will be in disgrace. But in defence of faith there will
arise from among the people those who are unknown to the world
and they will restore what has been trampled on.

I. RUSSIA AND THE CHURCH TODAY

THIS PROPHECY belongs to Porphyrius, the ascetic of Glinsk monastery.* It was published in 1914 as an epigraph to one of the books devoted to the veneration of the Name of God. The publishers, referring these words to their own lukewarm times, did not know the immeasurable depth of Russia's fall into the abyss which the Elder Porphyrius had foreseen. But soon, within a few years after these words became known, there burst upon Russia that gigantic catastrophe of which the first part of the prophecy testifies. Now, when already more than a half-century has passed from the moment when a God-fighting uprising unparallelled in human history began, and in the midst of the continuation in Russia of this fight against God, the opportunity has presented itself to us to make an attempt to arrive at an understanding of the destiny of the Russian church, in the perspective of the past fifty years and of her position today.**

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* Father Porphyrius, at first a priest in the world, rose up against the unrestricted liquor business, for which he suffered much injustice; he spent some time in Valaam Monastery, and ended his life of great asceticism as a holy man of the Glinsk Monastery in 1868. *(Trans. note.)*

** *The Orthodox Church on the Veneration of the Name of God and on the Prayer of Jesus,* St. Petersburg, 1914, published by *Ispovednik.*

For the course already of a number of decades, from the moment of the famous Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius (Staragorodsky) of July 16/29, 1927, and the proclamation of him as Locum Tenens (we will not touch here on the question of the canonical legality of his authority in the Church, first as Locum Tenens and then as Patriarch), the only voice speaking to the world in the name of the Russian Church (in Russia) has been the voice of the Moscow Patriarchate. It is precisely the Moscow Patriarchate that testifies to the world concerning the destiny of Christianity in Russia, and precisely she, as the only Russian Orthodox church recognized by the Soviet government, that takes care, supposedly, for the salvation of Orthodox Christians and the enlightenment of the "peoples of the USSR" (that is, within the bounds of her jurisdiction).

But what is the nature of her activity? To what has the condition of Orthodox Christians come in Soviet Russia as the result of two patriarchs, Sergius and Alexis? And before what does she now stand, on the eve of the election of a new patriarch?

As concerns the official declarations of the Moscow Patriarchate, which are oriented toward world opinion, there is no need to stop on them in detail; even without this, these declarations are zealously propagated and passed off for truth, even though it is known to everyone that they are one and the same constant lie which consists of the attempt to convince the world that there are no religious persecutions in the USSR, that freedom of religion exists in the USSR, etc. It is also well known that this lie exists to cover up, by means of the Church's voice, a directly contrary condition.

But the dimensions of the lie and its significance can be correctly evaluated only by an immediate eyewitness and member of the Russian Church, who bears the whole burden of religious life in contemporary Russia. And the present essay can be viewed precisely as the testimony of eyewitnesses.

AT THAT PRESENT TIME in the relations between the Moscow Patriarchate there is preserved a status-quo on the basis of the Sergian Declaration of 1927. This is the only fundamental, and in its way "symbolical" document that defines relations with the government and the whole actual activity of the Moscow Patriarchate up to the present day. In view of its exceptional importance, it should be the subject of a special analysis, even though it was many times subjected to deliberation in the 30's. However, now we can make only an essential observation.

The basic idea of the Declaration is the development of Orthodox life on all levels under the condition of loyalty to the new political, social, and economic order of the government. At first look we have before us an appeal to exclusively spiritual life, purified of the worldly-political sympathies which had been grafted on to the Church in the past. The Declaration evades by silence only one point: the significance of ideology in the new government, Metropolitan Sergius somehow "did not notice" the role of the Party's ideological guidance in the new governmental life, although the Bolsheviks from the very beginning annouced the total irreconcilability of their ideology with any other. But it is precisely in this that the whole essence of the Declaration and of the whole subsequent history of the Moscow Patriarchate is contained. All who were not in agreement, according to the idea of the "Declaration," were not ideological but rather political "enemies," while Sergius and his successors, so well received by the Bolsheviks, bound the Church hand and foot by means of loyalty not so much to the government as, primarily, to Communist ideology.

WE CAN DO nothing else than be bitterly convinced, according to the information that comes to us, that neither the West nor the Eastern Churches understand (and, perhaps, do not wish to understand) all the complexity not only of the outer, but also of the inner condition of the Russian Church. But at the same time, there is scarcely to be found in Soviet Russia a believer who has not experienced an acutely agonizing inner conflict with the policy of the Moscow Patriarchate. For any believing Christian, being one of the members of the Body of Christ, cannot help but feel his own personal responsibility in her life. The thought of this cannot help but arise in a believer at the sight of the condition in which the Russian Church finds herself. It is clear to everyone that this constitutes one of the manifestations of faith. This conflict occurs with special acuteness in the newly converted—in those who, by God's mercy, even now come to the Faith of Christ.

This fact of conversion in itself seems truly extraordinary in Soviet conditions. Without any doubt, there exists a manifest influx of believers into the Church, despite the fact that a governmental machine unprecedented in power and scale is directed toward the extermination of the very feeling of faith in "Soviet" man. Every conception and even the very memory of God and religion, it would seem, have been banished from the life of the satisfactory Soviet inhabitant. The Church also has been brought to manifest silence—however, to a hypocritical silence, since in order to assure the world of the good state of church life in Russia the mouth of her official representatives is open, one may say, uninterruptedly. The Moscow Patriarchate does not so much as think of any kind of apologetics, even though is it not now and precisely "before kings and governors" that those who consider themselves successors of the Apostles should be witnessing the truth of the Christian Faith? Alas, the Apostolic voice of enlightenment does not resound in the Moscow Patriarchate. But, nonetheless, Russian people by the unfathomable ways of God are brought by themselves into the House of God; for where else are they to go in search of the truth? Here is a striking testimony that in truth the Spirit bloweth where He will. We see also obvious examples of God's Providence for man, when another world is suddenly opened up to him; we know also how a "chance" encounter, a "fleeting" conversation, the testimony of history, even a brochure on "scientific" atheism become, sometimes without its being realized, a turning point in a man's spiritual life. And then, when he decides, finally, to transform his life and he comes to the Church—here not infrequently there occurs a profoundly dramatic conflict. Often a new convert, having felt the truth of Orthodox Christian doctrine, comes to a priest and asks to be baptized by him. Then, obtaining in the priest a spiritual father for himself, and having been reborn by the grace of baptism, the believer turns to church life with all the power of his newly-enlightened soul. He wishes to feel himself—and he does feel himself—to be a child of the Church, the child of his spiritual father. And then, having found himself within the church enclosure, without any kind of special knowledge, but only by force of an awakened Christian religious feeling, he suddenly sees that the school of spiritual growth for which his heart thirsts—does not exist! Church life is in profound and total disorder; there can be no talk of any kind of parish life—not to mention monasteries. He has nowhere from which to acquire experience in prayer; no one can answer many of the questions which arise before him both in his personal and in public life. But to all the new convert's perplexities his instructor evasively replies that it is a "difficult situation," "conditions aren't right," there is "pressure," and so forth. Further, in confidential conditions he can even explain more directly that the whole matter is one of pressure from the authorities, but that out of the "higher considerations" by which the Patriarchate is guided, one must be patient, humble oneself, compromise. And the believer, filled with profound respect for the priestly rank, in reverence before the person from whom he received baptism, knowing, finally, his own inexperience and sinfulness—accepts with trust the instruction of his spiritual father. And now he strives to crush in his soul this feeling of dissatisfaction with the situation of the Church and her relations with the government; he tries to convince himself that he simply does not understand the difficult situation of the episcopate and its wisdom; and he tries to convince himself that in general everything is satisfactory enough. As a result, he is raised on duplicity from the very beginning of his Christian life. The same thing occurs also with the new generation of believers from traditional families, with the sole difference that in the majority of cases they are raised already from childhood in a spirit of unconditional acceptance of all the actions of the Patriarchate. The utilization here of the commandment of humility is very significant: the Christian understanding of humility—the battle against pride—is utilized as a justification for the Church's inaction when she is attacked whether externally or internally. "Our kingdom is not of this world"—say the defenders of the Patriarchate, justifying her inaction while the Church is beind destroyed in Russia. But is not the Church-organization a manifestation of the Church-organism, and is it not called to action in the world? Otherwise why try so hard to preserve precisely the organization, making for its sake all possible concessions?

The appeal to false humility before the enemies of the Church is the only form of "obedience" which is actively installed into the hearts and minds of the faithful in Russia. Such an "upbringing" is conducted by various means, one of them being directly from the ambo—even by those priests who are considered the best. Sometimes in church right in the sermon one can hear a priest declare, addressing the faithful: "It isn't your business to judge hierarchs"; or "Your business is to pray—and that's all"; and so on. Why does the necessity for such exhortations arise? After all, it is well known that the Orthodox Church has always emphasized precisely the participation of *the Church's faithful themselves* in the destiny of the Church; that it is precisely *they* who accept any decision. It is sufficient to recall, in this connection, the Encyclical Letter of the Eastern Patriarchs in 1849. Evidently the Moscow Patriarchate now holds to another opinion in her practice. We think this is bound up with the fact that the people, knowing neither canons, nor rules, nor the history of the Church, and sometimes not knowing even Holy Scriptures—this church people in its heart feels the unsatisfactoriness of the Church's situation and often *does not believe the hierarchs.* "We have a good bishop—he's a believer"—one may hear among the people. Such praises are not apt to make one feel any better! Thus does the Patriarchate instil into her flock norms adopted from no one knows where.

It is absolutely clear that the general church awareness in Soviet Russia stands in sharp contradiction to the declarations of the Patriarchate concerning the "freedom" and "flourishing" of the Russian Church. It is essential to remark on this because in actual fact it does not manifest itself, since the lower clergy, by virtue of canonical submission, as is well known, cannot enter into deliberation over the decisions of the upper hierarchy—or else it is threatened with interdiction, as was the case with the well-known letter of the two priests, N. Eshliman and G. Yakunin.* The laymen also are silent, fearing to become a sacrifice of the authorities—and, what is most important, trusting the clergy, as has already been said. But in reality a paradoxical situation exists, in which even the most "pious" sons of the Patriarchate, striving consciously to follow her policy, in actual fact interiorly stand against her. Just try in conversation with such a believer to say concerning some respected hierarch: "Our Russian *Soviet* hierarch Anthony Bloom (or Basil Krivoshein)"—this will evoke a burst of indignation! But why? True enough that they are not Soviet citizens, but, after all, these respected persons are in the jurisdiction of the *Soviet* church, in *her* spiritual body! In accordance with the canons they participate in her voice! (Let us add: not only in accordance with the canons; in addition, by their silence they confirm the Patriarchate's lying assertions.) The expression "Soviet church," of course, will evoke yet greater indignation. But why? Our question is called forth not at all by any separation between the conceptions of Sovietism and Communism, as is done by some people out of naivete or out of hypocrisy, because it is clear that historically these two forms of governmental order and ideology are inseparably connected. No: a church which is directed in its life by an agreement with the State and its direct orders (the control of government officials over the bishops is known to all) is, naturally, a State church. And here there is no help from hypocritical citations of the separation of the church from the State in the USSR, because the real condition of affairs is evident to all. This is not merely the church of the Soviet period, but the church of the Soviet State, precisely the Soviet church, concerning which the official declarations of the Patriarchate also give sufficient testimony: let us recall, for example, the letter of loyalty of Metropolitan Pimen to Kosygin after his designation as Locum Tenens.

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* The Moscow priests whose open letter to Patriarch Alexis in 1965 concerning uncanonical conditions within the Patriarchate resulted in their suspension. *(Trans. note.)*

Nonetheless, a Soviet believer does not wish to and cannot call his mother-Church "Soviet," and even if he cannot explain it, all the same he feels that there exists not only the Patriarchate which is bound up with the Soviet authority, not only the church organization, but there exists also the holy and pure, one, catholic, and apostolic Church, in which the lying, deceit, and hypocrisy which proceed from the mouths of the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate have no part. A Soviet believer cannot force his tongue to call Metropolitan Anthony and Archbishop Basil or some revered hierarch in Russia itself "Soviet hierarchs"—truly blasphemous combination of words. May the Lord forgive us that we are forced to use it! The church consciousness naturally strives to find its spokesmen among the higher clergy in the same Soviet church, the only one in sight—something which is extremely difficult to do, since the KGB vigilantly sees to the advancement of "suitable" candidates.

The Soviet authority from the very beginning put, with regard to the Church, a radical question: "either us—or you." This question remains until now in all its acuteness and irreconcilability. The aim of the Soviet authority was and is not at all the subjection of the Church to itself, and not even her enslavement, but rather her total and definitive annihilation. Militant atheism is the State doctrine of the USSR. The subjection, the enslavement of the Church are only intermediate moments, steps toward her total annihilation. And every believer realizes this situation of the Church to the degree of his faith.

While the governmental authority openly announces its battle against faith and the Church, the Patriarchate gives the appearance of not noticing this, and even more, it strives to convince everyone of the contrary. From the most general point of view of a man who believes in Christ and the Church, the Body of Christ, what can one call this if not an evident betrayal of the Christian Faith? It goes without saying, and besides they have been assuring us of this since the time of Metropolitan Sergius, that the Church is being betrayed for her own benefit, that at the price of "insignificant" concessions one may preserve (!) (that is, buy) the primary thing, the life of the Church; while those not in agreement (for example, the authors of this essay) are declared, of course, politicians who supposedly are thinking not of the Church but of political interests, social order, and so forth. The tradition of accusing those not in agreement of politics was begun by Metropolitan Sergius in his "Declaration" of 1927. We believe the significance of such an accusation under Soviet conditions, even in the form of a hint, is apparent to all.

The Moscow Patriarchate repeats similar arguments at every convenient opportunity without any interference from the authorities. And yet "for some reason" one cannot manage to object to them publicly in Russia. And abroad these "arguments" not infrequently are believed, whether it be from hypocrisy or from want of faith. But they demand the severest kind of reply.

Here we wish to ask the Moscow Patriarchate (although we have no hope of receiving a reply): If disagreement with you on the question of relations to the government is politics, then what is your agreement with the Soviet religious policy, the aim of which—the eradication of all faith in God—is known to everyone? Are you not yourselves politicians, and incomparably worse ones? And at the moment when enemies again have surrounded Christ in order to take Him again to torture on the Cross, how does your "Hail, Rabbi" sound?

In order to perform a betrayal of Christ, one need not declare oneself His enemy; one need not even slander Him. A kiss is sufficient.

Of course, all this is not news today. Already for decades the world and Christians have been gradually schooled in the acceptance of militant warfare against God as a real, everyday and ordinary, natural fact. It fell to Russia's fate to be the center of this warfare, and the false testimony of the Patriarchate before the world in this period is especially criminal. For this warfare, without any doubt, has a truly universal-historical significance *for* *the destiny of all Christianity, for the destiny of the whole world.* It is evident that reconciliation with the Soviet warfare against God in Russia and in the whole world is a testimony not only of a decline of religiousness and faith, but also of a catastrophic fall of moral conceptions in general. The longer this process will continue, the closer humanity will move toward the edge of the abyss!

We repeat again what Soviet propaganda openly declares and over which the Moscow Patriarchate maintains a shameful silence: in the Soviet State ideology and politics are inseparable; politics are only a tool of ideology; ideological coexistence is impossible; the manifestation of any idea foreign to Sovietism-Communism is already politics and hostility. In this light it is evident that the very prideful pretensions of Metropolitan Sergius and his successors to save (!) the Church in Russia are only a hypocritical screen for spiritual worthlessness, for it is clear that Christian faith is being preserved in Russia only by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. But from the external "causal" point of view it is evident that the Communists cannot liquidate entirely the visible church organization because they are striving to create an impression of freedom of conscience in Russia in their battle for world supremacy. They would destroy in a moment, with satanic malice, both Metropolitans Pimen and Nikodim, if they had the opportunity. This signifies that the Soviet kingdom is without doubt an image of the future kingdom of Antichrist; in a long chain of historical analogies (there is no room here to speak of them) with the picture of the Apocalypse, this analogy is without doubt the closest one to the present day. What we ourselves see today, as also for the course of decades, in Russia, is a stern warning to mankind, a call to repentance—which, alas, the world does not accept.

Returning to the friendly relations of the Moscow Patriarchate with the Soviet regime, we should note that we do not intend to idealize either the Synodal church, or the church of the epoch of Muscovite Russia, or the Byzantine church. We believe that Church and State are distinct by nature and are always foreign to each other to some degree, as Church and world. Therefore, every alliance of Church with State is in some measure unnatural; but from this it is even more evident that an alliance of the Church with a militant anti-Christian State is *anti-natural.* This is why it is brought about in hypocritical forms, under the appearance of the "separation" of the Church from the State.

What is it, after all, that the Moscow Patriarchate "saves" at the price of its submission to the State? To this the answer is: the sacraments, liturgical life for the benefit of the peole. Let us see how true this is. There are some tens of churches in Moscow, in Leningrad, a few each in other large cities; but what is happening in the whole of Russia? In the Volga region? In Karelia? In the Urals? In Siberia? In the Far East? In the northern Caucasus? In the North? What did the Patriarchate "save" in all these immense expanses, where tens of millions of people live? Do we really not know that the churches everywhere there have been destroyed, with the exception of a negligible few? It is an ordinary evident when collective farm workers take children hundreds (!) of kilometers to be baptized, and the priests send them back: after all, one is obliged to present a passport, and as is well known, passports are not given out to collective farm workers to keep! Do we really not know that in vast segments of the population there is not only no faith, but there is simply no possibility to find it, since in actual fact in all these immense expanses there are not only no churches, but not even any books. The ordinary Soviet man does not even know who Christ might be, and he has never heard of the Trinity; having seen by chance representations of saints in an art album or in a closed church, he knows only that these are "gods." We said above that an influx of believers into the Church can be observed; naturally, this is observed more in places where there are more churches, people, books—in Moscow, in Leningrad. We see in this the undoubted action of grace, but one must call blasphemous the attempt to justify the inactivity and negligence of the hierarchy by the fact that believers come "themselves" to the Church, all the more in that this occurs in a quantity that is insignificant on the scale of the whole of Russia. And more than this: for many pure souls the evident double-facedness of the Patriarchate constitutes an obstacle to their joining the Church.

However, perhaps the Patriarchate has protested, has fought against the closing of churches? Perhaps she has attempted to demand the opportunity for religious enlightenment of the people? Alas, we do not know of *a single*, even the most timid, statement of the Patriarchate in favor of the opportunity for a minimal maintenance of religious life. Individual believers and their groups write an endless multitude of complaints and demands for the opening of churches, and some of these have gotten abroad; but has there been even a single case where the Patriarchate supported such demands? We do not know of such cases, and this clearly testifies to the genuine abyss between the church people and the hierarchy. With our own eyes we see how the shepherds shepherd themselves. We see how the thief comes and plunders the flock, for *the hireling is not a shepherd and careth not for the sheep.* Behold the literal indication of the Gospel! It is not surprising, in the light of all that has been said above, that the Soviet church has renounced the very martyrs and confessors of the Russian Church, the numberless choirs of which adorn her and are her glory. But we believe that our true holy hierarchs—Vladimir, Peter, Cyril, Joseph, Benjamin—and with them the great multitude of other known and unknown hierarchs, monks, and laymen headed by Patriarch Tikhon stand before the Throne of God, glorifying God and praying for the Russian Church, the Russian land, and the whole world. and it cannot be doubted that it is by their righteous prayers, and the prayers of other saints and the present-day confession of those who are for the most part unknown to the world, that the Russian Church stands, and not by contrivances, truly lying ones, to "save" the Church by way of some kind of negotiations with satan. Before the greatness of the martyric exploit of the great hierarchs in the recent past, the "merits" of Sergius and Alexis, such as the dispute with Fr. Sergius Bulgakov* and the like are ridiculous.**

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* In the 1930's, having learned from the fiasco of the "Living Church," the Moscow Patriarchate tried to present itself as theologically "conservative," and thus it condemned the heretical "Sophiology" of Fr. S. Bulgakov. Such "conservatism" on a particular point, of course, is far outweighed by the submission of the whole church to communist ideology and purposes.

** Here we cannot refrain from citing an example of how the Russian church shows concern for the imprisoned and persecuted sons and daughters of... the Greek people. Patriarch Alexis wrote in this regard (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1968, no. 3, p.1, "On the Situation in Greece and the Church of Greece") to Archbishop Jerome of Athens: "In the days of the Feast of the Theophany we have the *moral necessity* (!) to address you our word of *uneasiness of soul* over those sons and daughters of the Greek people, who for *their views and strivings for freedom and democracy* have for a long time been *unjustly* confined to prison. We address to you our brotherly appeal to raise your hierarchal word, which could have its influence, for the liberation of all of them from prisons and camps, which without doubt would serve for the restoration of normal life in Greece and bring joy to all men of good will. This statement of yours would be *a gift*

In Russia now there is beginning a very slow and almost unnoticeable awakening from the great shock by which she has been paralyzed for the course of decades. Individual voices of protest are appearing in the midst of the public, attempts to stand against the death-dealing movement of the Party-Soviet machine. What is the position of the Russian Church with regard to these voices?

Those priests who still have a conscience of necessity lead a double life. On the one hand, such a batiushka carries out the "loyal" policy of the Patriarchate with regard to the State, that is, he limits himself in church to the minimum ritual requirements. On the other hand, subjecting himself to every danger (if he is sufficiently honest), he transgresses this line: he celebrates baptisms secretly (without registration), tries to attract someone to the Church (which he cannot do openly), gives the Gospel and spiritual books to read, and so forth. Thus, authentic religious life always has in reality a "catacomb" character. But the opportunities for its devolopment are insignificant: after all, the lower clergy is in the leash of the Patriarchate and cannot overstep the limits of the concordat. It need not even be said that the higher clergy in essence has no contact at all with the believing masses. The contemporary hierarchs are genuine princes of the church, for the most part far from the people as, let us say, the Secretaries of the Regional Committees.* And indeed, why should they get close to the people? What can they say to the

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acceptable to the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of the world(!), Who came to lay down His life for the deliverance of many, 'to proclaim release to the captives, and to set at liberty them that are bruised' (Luke 4:18). With brotherly love (signature)." And there are a multitude of such examples.

We do not know whether it is necessary to comment on this "moral necessity" in the mouth of the head of a church who not once in his whole 25-year activity in the rank of Patriarch ever remarked that the sons and daughters of his own homeland for the course of decades have undergone such horrors of actual genocide, not to speak of prisons and concentration camps of which, to their good fortune, the Greeks have never dreamed. Therefore, it is clear what relationship the late Patriarch Alexis and his present successors had and have to any opposition to the Soviet regime: this is not an entirely innocent withdrawal from politics!

* The factual heads of the Communist Party organization in each region. *(Trans. note.)*

people, they who have bound themselves by loyalty and submission to an anti-Christian authority? The Soviet church hierarchy, not desiring to become a "catacomb" church, has been converted into a self-isolating "church." It is foreign to the people and does not try to get near to them. The contemporary Soviet man, stupefied by vodka and political enlightenment looks at churches with a stupid-indifferent look, not expecting from them any kind of voice that could warm him and reveal the truth to him. There is no such voice, but man thirsts for it because he is weary from the endless lie everywhere. True, forms of the Divine services are fundamentally the same as before, the rites for the time being (for the time being!) are not being changed. Yes, liturgical life exists. But of what sort is it? The absence of opportunities for any kind of correct church life deprives believers of preparation for the sacraments. Communion is accessible essentially to anyone at any time, because faith in the church people has been widely replaced by superstition, and this means that the relationship to the Sacrament also acquires essentially, as it were, a formal magical meaning: deprived of any conception of a sacrament, believers sometimes come to the Chalice several times each. It is totally forgotten that this is a great and fearful Sacrament, before which Angels tremble, in the words of the Holy Fathers. Truly, the profound carelessness that may be observed toward the Sacrament of the Eucharist is possible only in the absence of the fear of God. Magism is present also in Soviet hierarchs, inasmuch as the awareness of their hierarchical dignity is turned in them within themselves. Shut up in their own inaccessibility, they as it were compensate for their non-participation in the life and sufferings of the Church. This is accompanied by profiteering on the profound respect of believers for the priestly rank. Here there is manifested a conviction of their own exclusive indispensability, that is, a conviction that the preservation at any price of the position of the hierarchy is precisely the preservation of the Church.

"If everyone goes underground," says the representatives of the Patriarchate, "then who will take care of the people?" But we have already shown that authentic religious life all the same inevitably strives toward the underground: Soviet actuality itself compels this. It is said likewise that the hierarchs are bad, of course, but that they are also as it were a transitional bridge to the future, when the Church will be free. To this let us say that it is gratifying to us, to be sure, to see faith in the future freedom of the Church; but one must also believe unwaveringly that the preservation of the hierarchal succession in the Church belongs to her Head, Christ, and not to human contrivances; if the meaning of the contemporary upper hierarchy is only in being a "bridge," is it really necessary to seek from the Soviet authority the supports for this "bridge"? This after all is already unbelief in the fact that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against her* (the Church), if one must seek support from the gates of hell! Or do you think that Christ will not preserve the Church in the midst of persecutions? But where then is faith? To the fate of the Church at the time of persecutions one may apply the words concerning salvation: *With men it is impossible, but not with God.* Alas, those who have bound the Patriarchate with the Soviet regime are such that there is no hope for her own internal regeneration. Leaning upon the Soviet authority, she will share its fate until the end of the Soviet regime.

The conviction of the apologists of the Moscow Patriarchate noted above, that there will be freedom in future for the Church and Russia, is remarkable in its own way. This conviction is widespread. But we turn to them again with a question: with what do you intend to enter on this period of freedom? Conviction of the future liberation of the Church is precisely the fruit of faith, which, consequently, is alive to some degree. But how can one unite faith in the liberation of our Church by Christ with a conviction of the indispensability of the hierarchy's apostatical compromise with Soviet atheism? In this case the Church, essentially, is identified with the hierarchy, that is, with the church-organization.

All the arguments in defense and justification of the Moscow Patriarchate which we have attempted to examine are contradictory and, in the last analysis, are not serious. They are based on a desire to view the existing situation in the church as natural and, from the spiritual point of view (supposedly), satisfactory. The contradiction, as was shown above, is easily laid bare: when talk is of the external assault upon the church, it is said that "our kingdom is not of this world"; but when the spiritual compromise with the prince of this world is pointed out, it is replied that this is essential for the preservation of the hierarchal succession, churches, etc.—that is, the external organization of the church. Naturally, such an indefiniteness testifies to the spiritual unsureness, the internal (not to mention external) disorder of the Moscow Patriarchate. Such a situation cannot continue forever. Religious awareness must either entirely become aware of itself, or else disappear altogether as religious awareness. The latter course, abstractly speaking, is likewise possible: after all, the once flourishing Church of Carthage disappeared. We, however, fortify ourselves with the faith that the spiritual renewal of Russia and the liberation of the Church will yet occur. We believe that if the world does not perish, sooner or later in liberated Russia there will be a Local Council of our Church, to which the fruits of their labors and exploits for the long period without a Council (for one cannot call Councils those convocations of Soviet hierarchs which the Council of Religious Affairs organizes together with the Patriarchate) will be brought forth by the Moscow Patriarchate and by the persecuted Russian "Catacomb" Church, to which the authors of this article belong, *and of the continuing existence of which they consider it a sacred duty to bear witness at the first opportunity that has offered itself.* To this future council the "Catacomb" Church will bring the testimony of the purity of her faith, unstained by any kind of compromises with the enemies of Christ; for prayer that has been bought is impure prayer. The "Catacomb" Church will bring also the testimony of the exploits in the name of Christ of her martyrs and confessors, whom we have already mentioned above. She will bring also the testimony of her unwavering faith in Jesus Christ, by which alone she has fortified herself and lived already for decades, preserved by Divine grace amidst persecutions and betrayals. For just as the Soviet kingdom is a prefiguration of Antichrist, so also the "Catacomb" Church is the nearest of all prefigurations of the Church at the time of Antichrist—the Woman clothed with the sun who has fled to the wilderness.* Her garments are woven of the exploits of saints. Just as in the time of the Prophet Elijah, the Lord has preserved for Himself seven thousand faithful, until the time known to Him alone.

Our Church lives a difficult life; her members are mercilessly exterminated by the authorities; we are betrayed by brethren who consider themselves Orthodox. We are scattered like wheat, but we believe that in the hour when it is necessary Christ will send His faithful disciple, who will strengthen his brethren. Together with the Apostle Paul we dare to say: *We are not of them that shrink back into perdition, but of them that have faith unto*

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* Apocalypse, ch. 12 (Trans. note.)

the saving of the soul (Heb. 10:39). And this our faith, by which *kingdoms are subdued* (Heb. 11:33), gives us the strength to await the hour of God's visitation. *God is with us, understand, ye peoples, and submit, for God is with us!*

II. CHURCH AND AUTHORITY

There is no authority but of God.
Romans 13:1

THE CHURCH DOCTRINE concerning authority is based on the Divinely-revealed word of the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans. Every existing authority is established by God. It is given to men for the good, for *the ruler is the minister of God,* and good is from God. *Wherefore ye must needs by in subjection for conscience' sake,* for one is in subjection to principles of good. The conscience always accuses injustice, as the Apostle Paul has testified: *I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit* (Rom. 9:1). Authority is given by God in order to preserve and fulfill the law. But the law, in the Apostolic teaching, can be fulfilled only when it is fulfilled in love. The essence of life is love. And love is life. Love is always revealed in relation to some object. Created human nature in its original form could live only by love for its Creator. He who wishes to live in love inevitably turns to the Source of love, to our Lord Jesus Christ. Where there is no God, there is no love.

But how should one look on the Soviet authority, following the Apostolic teaching on authorities? In accordance with the Apostolic teaching which we have set forth, one must acknowledge that the Soviet authority is not an authority. It is an *anti-authority.* It is not an authority because it is not established by God, but insolently created by an aggregation of the evil actions of men, and it is consolidated and supported by these actions. If the evil actions weaken, the Soviet authority, representing a condensation of evil, likewise weakens. Evil arises when the Will of God is transgressed. For man this is the transgression of God's commandments. The enemy of the human race instructs in this. Satan wages war with God, and the field of battle is the hearts of men. This authority consolidates itself in order to destroy all religions, simply to eradicate faith in God. Its essence is warfare with God, because its root is from satan. The Soviet authority is not authority, because by its nature it cannot totally fulfill the law, for the essence of its life is evil.

It may be said that the Soviet authority, in condemning various crimes of men, can still be considered authority. We do not say that a ruling authority is totally lacking. We only affirm that it is an anti-authority. One must know that the affirmation of real power is bound up with certain actions of men, to whom the instinct of preservation is natural. And they must take into consideration the laws of morality which have been inherent in mankind from ages of old. But in essence this authority systematically commits murder physically and spiritually. In reality a hostile power acts, which is called the Soviet authority. The enemy strives by cunning to compel humanity to acknowledge this power as an authority. But the Apostolic teaching on authority is inapplicable to it, jsut as evil is inapplicable to God and the good, because evil is outside God; but the enemies with hypocrisy can take refuge in the well-known saying that everything is from God.

This *Soviet anti-authority* is precisely a collective antichrist, warfare against God. Therefore also the Apostle has testified from the Holy Spirit: *There is no authority but of God.* Evidently it is our lot to live during the approach of the last times, when the enemy by a form of truth cunningly entangles men, while in essence it offers anti-truth.

After the appearance of the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, the Sergianist church organization irreversibly entered into an adulterous tie with the Soviet State. Immediately there was introduced into Divine services the commemoration of the God-hating authorities. This was a blow at the Christian heart, a sinister trampling down of souls, a mockery against the memory of the ranks of new martyrs. The history of the Church of Christ had not yet known such a terrible fall of a church organization, at the head of which there stood fighters against God.

The pure conscience of the faithful could not accept this. It could not accept the enforced bond of a free, pure organism with evil. It could not accept the bond of an organism of love with hatred for this organism. It could not in eucharistic love be together with the Judas-betrayers. There was only one way out: to depart from evil so as not to commit iniquity.

In the purity of her fundamental principle the Church is always free. Where the Holy Spirit is, there is freedom. Love lives in freedom. The believer with a pure conscience irrepressibly strives toward such an organism, that is, toward the Church of Christ. In an organism of purity and sanctity he receives a free absolution from sin. Christian souls in the Church of Christ are seized by an unfathomable joy of freedom. Then the world is powerless in the spirit of malice, because in the heart love triumphs. It can only physically destroy earthly life, but it is not given it to destroy life that has been redeemed.

Can one leave the Sergianist church? The Sergianists constantly deceive the church people, affirming that in their church there is no perversion of dogma. Our conscience testifies that it is not dogmas affirmed by the Church that have been perverted, but rather the very nature of the Church—the freedom given her by our Lord Jesus Christ has been trampled on. The soul of a sincere believer can never come into contact with the fullness of freedom in the Sergianist church, because the Sergianist sin will constantly torture it. Sergianism has perverted the doctrine of the Holy Church which was handed down by the Apostles and in the writings of the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church. Concerning this there is the testimony of the exploit of martyrdom and confession of the saints who have departed from the Sergianist church organization.

In this terrible period of human history—the fall of the world into the abyss of hell—the shattered Christian world, which is close to our heart, must become inflamed with universal love. The sufferings of the Russian martyrs call to a joining together around Christ in a great triumph of love. Then God's love will pour out its grace in abundance on His Church. The Church of Christ will recognize herself, her fullness, and will incarnate this in the last church dogma, which manifestly will show that Sergianism is outside the Church.

39

Metropolitan Theodosius

CHIEF HIERARCH OF THE TRUE-ORTHODOX CHURCH OF RUSSIA

MANY TRUE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS in the free world were shocked and disturbed when the world-renowned Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn, now living in exile in Switzerland, wrote in his Letter to the Third All-Diaspora Council of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, meeting at Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, New York, in September of this year, that "one should not substitute in imaginary fashion a catacomb church for the real Russian Orthodox people," denied the very existence of a "secret church organization," and warned the hierarchs of the Church Outside of Russia that they should not "show solidarity with a mysterious, sinless, but also bodiless catacomb." The enemies of True Orthodoxy and defenders of the Sergianist Moscow Patriarchate were quick to take advantage of these phrases for their own propagandistic purposes, reporting them under such headlines as *No "Catacomb" Church.** It would indeed benefit greatly the progress of renovationist "Orthodoxy" if it could be "proved"— or at least shouted loudly enough — that there is no "Catacomb Church" in Russia, that the only Orthodoxy in the USSR is the renovated, Sergianist version of it presented to the world by the Moscow Patriarchate — which indeed, Solzhenitsyn believes, is not at all "fallen" but is the real Orthodox Church of Russia. These statements of Solzhenitsyn raise important questions of two kinds: of fact, and of theology.

To be sure, at the beginning of his Letter Solzhenitsyn writes: "Realizing my unpreparedness for stepping out on an ecclesiastical question before a gathering of priests and hierarchs who have devoted their whole life to the service of the Church... I only beg condescension for my possible mistakes in terminology or in the very essence of my judgments"; and at the end he again apologizes: "I do not fancy myself called to decide ecclesiastical questions." It would therefore surely be no offence to Solzhenitsyn, who speaks so convincingly and truthfully on other questions, to point out, for those who wish to hear the truth, his mistakes both in fact and theology regarding the True-Orthodox Church of Russia.

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* So *The Orthodox Church*, official organ of the American Metropolia, November, 1974, p. 2.

These mistakes of Solzhenitsyn, as it turns out, have had one fortunate consequence: they have caused several persons who have more accurate information than he about church life in the Soviet Union to speak out and directly refute his claim that there is no "secret church organization" there:

1. One revealing glimpse of the continuing life of Russia's Catacomb Church is contained in the brief biography of the young Vladimir Osipov, editor for four years of the now-defunct Samizdat periodical *Veche*, which was noted for its strong nationalist and Orthodox intent, expressing the "Slavophile" position in contemporary Russia. According to an article of Alexei Kiselev, based on an interview with Anatoly Levitin (Krasnov),* when Osipov was in a concentration camp in the 1960's "he met a strange old man whom all the prisoners called 'Vladika.' This was Michael, a bishop of the True-Orthodox Church. He made a powerful impression on Osipov and this encounter, it may be, is what turned him to religion." This very mention of a True-Orthodox (Catacomb) Bishop in the contemporary Soviet Union, and of his influence on the young generation of religious seekers, is already an important sign for those thirsting for every scrap of information on True Orthodoxy in Russia; but fortunately, from the same Krasnov and other sources, we now have a much better idea than this of the existence of Catacomb Bishops in the Soviet Union today.

2. The monthly bulletin *Religion and Atheism in the USSR* (in Russian), published in Munich by N. Theodorovich, has printed portions of three letters it has received from persons of German origin who recently emigrated from the Soviet Union and who, independently of each other, have reacted to Solzhenitsyn's statements on the Catacomb Church. One of them writes:

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* Russian text in *Novoye Russkoye Slovo,* about Feb. 1, 1975, p. 3.

"A. I. Solzhenitsyn has not happened to meet any members of this Church. I was with them in prison and worked together with them in a corrective-labor colony. They are deeply believing people and very firm in faith. They are persecuted for belonging to this prohibited Church."

The second writes: " 'Catacomb' or 'Secret' Church is the named used here [outside of Russia]. In the USSR it is called the 'True-Orthodox' or 'Tikhonite' Church. To it belong deeply-believing Orthodox people who do not recognize the official church. For this the regime persecutes them. I know many of them who are now free, but I will not give their names or places of residence."

The third writer gives a more complete description of the life of the True-Orthodox Church, whose services are sometimes conducted by monks, nuns, and laymen: "The True-Orthodox Church has a hierarchy, but the majority of it is in prison or in corrective colonies. Members of the True-Orthodox Church conduct their services according to the rituals of the Orthodox Church. If they have no priest, the services are conducted by someone who knows most about them. I know of some who have not married and have dedicated themselves to God from childhood; they also conduct services. These are, as a rule, absolutely honest people who lead a morally pure life. In the USSR members of the True-Orthodox Church are cut off from the influences of the world on their life and are absolutely dedicated to God. The greater part of the believers of the True-Orthodox Church conduct their services under ordained priests. Your suppositions that the members of the True-Orthodox Church are only old people who remain from the time of the schism of 1927 brought a smile to my lips. Those whom I personally knew were born *after* 1927. Of course, there are also those who remember 1927. They also have non-liturgical gatherings for prayer, when they read the Holy Scripture and spiritual books. Their prayer, for the most part, amounts to petitions for the awakening of faith in the Russian people. They sometimes allow young people at their Divine services if they know that they will not betray them to the militia or the KGB. The less publicity there is about them, the better for them. But it should be known that they need books of Holy Scripture and spiritual literature."*

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* *Religion and Atheism in the USSR*, December, 1974, p. 9.

3. The most striking information about the True-Orthodox Church of Russia to be given in recent months comes from the well-known fighter for "civil rights" in the Soviet Union, Anatoly Livitin (Krasnov), who left the USSR for exile in Switzerland in September of this year. In his youth he took an active part as a Deacon in the "Living Church" schism, and even today, long after repenting and returning to the Orthodox Church, his views can only be described as extremely "liberal" and "ecumenical." His testimony of the True-Orthodox Church is all the more valuable in that he cannot be accused of any preconceived sympathy for it; for him it is a "sect," and therefore it is as deserving of as much respect and freedom as any other "sect" in the contemporary Soviet Union.

The first statement of Krasnov's that we shall quote comes from his Samizdat declaration to the Committee on Human Rights in Moscow, made on September 5, just before his departure from the Soviet Union. Here, together with his protests against the persecution of Uniats, Baptists, Adventists, Pentecostalists, and Jehovah's Witnesses, there is a section on "*Persecutions Against the True-Orthodox Church* (*TOC*)." Here he writes: "This Church has been subjected to persecutions for the course of 47 years." He continues with an historical account of the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927 and the protests of a number of bishops against it; of how all the bishops who took part in the "Schism of 1927" perished in the 1930's in the concentration camps; and of how they managed to ordain a number of bishops in the camps as their successors, from whom the present secret hierarchy of the True-Orthodox Church derives its existence. He continues: "The number of members of the TOC is not subject to reckoning. However, according to information received from members of this Church, it has from eight to ten bishops, about 200 priests, and several thousand laymen. The activity of the TOC is strictly persecuted. The regime fears its spread."*

4. Yet more detailed information on the True-Orthodox Church was given by Krasnov after his arrival in the West, where he discovered that, once again, a part of the Russian "liberal" intelligentsia was rejoicing over the "non-existence of the Catacomb Church," which this time had been "proved" by Solzhenitsyn. This is what Krasnov said in an interview with the Paris Russian weekly, *La Pensee Russe* (December 5, 1974, p. 5):

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* *Religion and Atheism in the USSR*, December, 1974, p. 2.

"As for the Catacomb Church — it exists, it is not an invention. According to my information, it has about ten bishops. These bishops have their hierarchichal succession from the Josephites, the bishops who separated from Metropolitan Sergius in 1927... At the present time there are, as far as I know, perhaps twelve, perhaps eight bishops. They were all ordained in the camps by the hierarchs who were there, and all of them are developing their own activity. There are also priests. But all the same, this is a very small layer of the population. In the first place, all of this is so profoundly secret that it is very difficult to find out anything for sure. I know one nun who came to an Orthodox archimandrite in order to persuade him to go over to the 'True-Orthodox Church.' When he began to ask her more details, she replied to him: 'When you come over to us, they will tell you everything.' I know that there is an underground Metropolitan Theodosius — he is their head, and in connection with the election of Patriarch Pimen he published [in Samizdat] his own proclamation, which went about Moscow, Peter,* and Kiev, under the signature of 'Metropolitan Theodosius,' where in the name of the 'True-Orthodox Church' a negative attitude was declared toward the Patriarchate. In private conversations they usually say that they consider the closest current to themselves to be the Orthodox Synodal Church, the so-called 'Karlovitz' Church [the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia]. They usually say: strictly speaking we are not against the regime; we are monarchists, but we are not against the regime, inasmuch as every authority is from God.** They only cannot accept the hierarchy, inasmuch as it is in dependence on the atheists. Well, they consider Patriarch Tikhon their last head [i.e., patriarch], which is why usually in the camps they are called 'Tikhonites.' It should be said that their adherents are usually old people, or those released from the camps. Their Divine services usually occur in private apartments,and at these secret Liturgies three or four people are present.... The True-Orthodox Church hides itself too much in the underground; it has the character of something so secret, so mysterious, that literally no one can find it; although, to be sure, one cannot refuse to respect these people who are very firm, very sincere."

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* A pre-Revolutionary nickname for St. Petersburg (now "Leningrad").

** This is probably not an accurate statement about the position of the True-Orthodox Church in Russia on this point. See the Samizdat Catacomb document "Church and Authority"

40

The Catacomb Church, 1976

(As reported in the Russian publication *Nasha Strana,*
Buenos Aires, April 26, 1977, p. 3, and *Religion and Atheism*
in the USSR, July 1976, no. 8, pp. 18-19.)

IN THE SOVIET UNION it is not allowed to take out of the country the provincial newspapers of the "autonomous republics" or of districts or counties But the information to be found in such local newspapers is usually much more interesting and significant than the "official" news printed in the Moscow newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* or than the sensational declarations of many of the "dissidents" in the capital.

According to the account of the Moscow correspondent of the Reuters news service (May 13, 1976), the newspaper *Soviet Abhazia* (published in the city of Sukhumi) has reported the trial and judgment of a priest of the True-Orthodox (Catacomb) Church of Russia, Archimandrite Gennady (Gregory Sekach in the world), in connection with the uncovering of a large and highly organized part of the Catacomb Church's activity in the south of Russia.

According to *Soviet Abhazia,* Gregory Sekach was converted to the faith during the Second World War. He later attended and completed a seminary course and served for some time as an officially-registered priest (non-monastic) of the Moscow Patriarchate. Being a conscientious priest, however, he inevitably came into conflict with the church authorities, themselves under the pressure of the officials of the atheist regime, and in 1962 — at the height of the Khrushchev persecution — he was accused of violating the Soviet laws concerning religious "cults" (specifically, "for attracting children and young people to church") and was deprived of his parish and official registration as a priest.

After this, Father Gregory "disappeared" from Soviet life and went literally into the catacombs. He entered into contact with the True-Orthodox Church, which had continued to exist as an underground body for all the years since the time of Metropolitan Joseph and the other confessing bishops of 1927, having no contact at all with the Communist-dominated Moscow Patriarchate. In two years of underground activity Father Gregory built up a catacomb parish in one of the cities of the Ukraine, and here also he received the monastic tonsure with the name of Gennady. A certain Bishop Seraphim of the Catacomb Church raised Hieromonk Gennady to the rank of Archimandrite and sent him to the republic of Abhazia, to the industrial city of Tkvarcheli in the region of "New Athos" on the shore of the Black Sea, the site of the famous metochion of the Russian monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mt. Athos which was destroyed by the Soviets in 1924. *Soviet Abhazia* admits that the Soviet authorities were unable to discover anything about this Bishop Seraphim, who apparently continues his catacomb activity.

Here in ten years, from 1966 to 1976, Father Gennady managed to organize several secret communities of the Catacomb Church, to build for them a whole series of secret house churches in private dwellings, and to form several monasteries for men and women as well as a secret theological school.

Father Gennady's helpers, as the Soviet newspaper relates, travelled throughout the Soviet Union in order to meet with secret groups of believers. These helpers "recruited" many young men and women into their ranks and brought them back to Abhazia, where they were settled in various industrial and factory jobs in Tkvarcheli and in the evening attended the underground theological courses. Many of these young people received the monastic tonsure and returned to their native places to conduct religious activity among the people there.

This activity was uncovered by the Soviet authorities in 1976 with the arrest of Archimandrite Gennady, who was betrayed by an informer. His collaborators and helpers were not caught, but Archimandrite Gennady himself was sentenced to four years in a forced-labor camp. *Soviet Abhazia* ascribes to these activists of the Catacomb Church an extreme fanaticism and an anti-Soviet political activity (manifested in the distribution of anti-Soviet leaflets).

All this, of course, is only an account of an article in a Soviet newspaper (and even the article itself seems not to have been brought out of the Soviet Union: therefore it is impossible to give any precise evaluation of all these details. The general picture, however, both from this account and from other reports from Soviet sources and from new emigrants to the West, is clear: the activity of the Catacomb True-Orthodox Church continues in Russia, attaining at times a remarkable degree of organized activity (considering the cruel Soviet circumstances, where it is a crime against the State to worship secretly and not at officially-tolerated churches), and having the ability to preserve its members from arrest even when an important center of its activity has been uncovered. As long as the Soviet tyranny will continue in power, we will probably receive no more than hints, such as this article contains, about the actual life of the Catacomb Church in Russia. It is obvious that when freedom returns to Russia, much about this secret life will be revealed that is scarcely even suggested today.

Bishop Seraphim is only the second member of the present-day hierarchy of the Catacomb Church to be publicly known in the West by name (the other being Metropolitan Theodosius, the present chief hierarch of the Catacomb Church). Interestingly, from the earlier history of the Catacomb Church in Russia (which is much better known to us than the post-World War II era) we know of a Seraphim who would, in fact, probably be a bishop today if he is still alive (he was born in 1903). This is the clairvoyant elder, Hieromonk Seraphim, before whom an Optina monk prophetically bowed down and took a priest's blessing when the elder was only five years old; we know of the catacomb activity of this Father Seraphim in 1941, when he pastured a flock in the literal underground, going from town to town and miraculously escaping detection by the Secret Police, who were constantly looking for him.* Perhaps one day we will know whether today's Bishop Seraphim is this very offspring of Optina Monastery and its tradition of elders, keeping Holy Russia alive even under the reign of godlessness.

Undoubtedly Father Gennady, in accord with Soviet practice, is being subjected to cruel treatment and tortures, both in order to make him reveal the names of other members of the Catacomb Church, and in general as a punishment for his "crimes" against the Soviet State. All Orthodox Christians who care for their suffering brethren should offer up fervent prayers for his well-being and salvation.

41

The Catacomb Church, 1979

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEXANDER ANDREEVICH CHERNOV*

A Russian emigre in Bulgaria before the Second World War, with a degree in theology and philosophy from the University of Sofia, A. A. Chernov was arrested by the invading Soviet armies during the War for his anti-Soviet political activities and spent 35 years in the USSR, 15 of them in prison camps and 20 literally "underground," before being allowed to leave the country quite recently. In his 20 years of "freedom" he was in close contact with the Catacomb Church of Russia, and his information on it given in this interview is the most recent we have from an actual member of this Church.

Question: How did you enter into the Catacomb Church?

Answer: I became acquainted with representatives of this Church in the camp in the 1940's. They were in prison for their faith, but it was according to the same Article 58.** With their help, when I left the camp (in 1955) I was already able to get into contact with the Catacomb Church, and I went underground. If I had not done this they would not have left me in peace, but as it is for twenty years I was able to do something.

At the time I entered the Catacomb Church, my conception of life in the Soviet Union was totally non-existent. After all, I had never been outside of prison in the Soviet Union, and I had no idea what life was like there. In the Catacomb Church I was completely hidden, and I lived literally within four walls. I was never under the open sky, and the sun never shone on me. I learned about life outside gradually, from the accounts of others, and during the times I was being transferred to new places. I often had to be transferred: with the least suspicion of danger to me I was immediately transferred a great distance away, as a rule, from one republic to another, some thousands of kilometers from my previous hiding place. I was very much protected because of my theological education, since such people in the Catacomb Church have always been and are in short supply.

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* Translated from *Possev*, a monthly magazine published in Frankfort-am-Main, October, 1979, pp. 140-146.

** Of the Soviet Constitution: for "anti-Soviet activities."

Question: Tell us, please, a few words about how the Catacomb Church arose.

Answer: The Catacomb Church appeared together with the Soviet regime, when the first priests and bishops were executed without trial, when they began to destroy the churches, when Christians began to give refuge to those who were being sought by the persecutors. Patriarch Tikhon understood that the majority of the bishops were threatened by death; after all, where could one hide metropolitans, archbishops, and bishops who were known to everyone? Therefore, recognizing that the Church could no longer remain entirely open, Patriarch Tikhon at almost every service ordained bishops, even in small cities. It is considered that under him there were ordained about one thousand bishops*; they could lose themselves in the midst of the people and place a beginning for the Catacomb Church. When the official Church began openly to cooperate with the Communists (in 1927), then for the Catacomb Church there was no longer any possibility of communion with her.

Question: How is the Catacomb Church organized?

Answer: It is easiest to imagine this in graph form: There is a large circumference and its center. The circumference is the immense multitude of points or cells of the Church. Between these cells there is no contact, but they all have a connection of ideas with the "center," in some form or other.

Question: It is interesting that this is similar to the structure of the NTS (political party) in the country: the same cells, although the center is abroad. This kind of organizational system of underground organizations in a totalitarian land we call "molecular," founded on the spontaneous arising of points of opposition in the country .

Ed. Note: This figure seems high, even if it were to include all the bishops ordained in the 1920's and 30's. Probably not many more than 300 bishops are known to us by name from this period, although, of course, we have almost no information whatever about the secret ordinations of this period.

Answer: Probably this happens somehow by itself, if one decides to act in the underground. Cells in the Catacomb Church are also formed without any kind of initiative from the center. A man simply comes to the conclusion that the official Church is not the Church. It is created by the Party, penetrated by the KGB. He begins to pray at home. Thus, a "house church" arises, just as in Apostolic times when the Church of Christ was persecuted. The Holy Apostle Paul in his Epistles writes just these words: "the house church" (Rom. 16:5). The whole Catacomb Church is precisely an immense multitude of "house churches." Each one of them is most concerned with how to be secret and unnoticed.

This whole mass of cells lives a varied life: there are those who are just beginning, but there are also real monastery sketes where the services go on *ceaselessly* the whole day long from year to year. I was able to be in some real underground churches. Sometimes such churches are built in caves. There are some groups in which the members of the Catacomb Church lead a most ascetic way of life, and the regime itself, when it uncovers them from time to time, is astonished by the way these people live.

In the Catacomb Church there are strict rules of security. In short, this is a large underground organization which has been acting in the USSR for sixty years already. Of course, one cannot speak about it as some kind of unchanging organization, always the same. Everything changes with the course of time. Gradually its membership changes, and its rules change also—they become all the time more drastic. The Catacomb Church strives outwardly not to manifest itself at all, to preserve itself; therefore it is not so easy to find it, and in the West, I think, very little is known about it. In any case it is a large group of people into which the regime is not able to penetrate. But attempts are made to do this. Knowing about the lack of priests in the Catacomb Church, the regime tries to send to us its agents under the appearance of priests. For example, there have been cases where such ones have tried to pass themselves off for people who received the priesthood from Metropolitan Philaret of New York.

But despite the lack of priests, the Catacomb Church is not dying out, as Father Dimitry Dudko thinks.* The skeleton of it remains the same—

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* In a letter published earlier this year in *Possev*, Fr. Dimitry wrote, not that the Catacomb Church is "dying out," but more simply that it has too few clergy to take care of the needs of the Orthodox population of Russia. (Ed. note.)

and knowing the history of the Ecumenical Church, one should not underestimate this. When the priests did not hold their ground, then it was monasticism that preserved the truth. Let us hope in God. All our hope is only in God. *My strength is made perfect in weakness* (II Cor. 12:9). In the Catacomb Church is the remnant of Holy Russia, which, despite all its attempts, the Soviet God-fighting regime has not been able to annihilate up to this time.

We know that the boundaries of the Church do not correspond with the boundaries of the State. And therefore, the Catacomb Church looks with hope and expectation upon the Russian Church Outside of Russia. When we hear a voice that says that perhaps there are no longer any bishops in our Church here, we reply: Well, we have a "gold reserve" of them there, outside of Russia.

Question: But still, is there any contact between these cells that gives anyone the right to speak of the existence in the USSR of a Catacomb Church as a certain unity?

Answer: Yes, without doubt. First of all, they are all united by the acceptance and evaluation of our times as the "last times." The USSR is a spiritual phenomenon of these last times, which is revealing itself in a totalitarian fight against God. It is entirely understandable that the USSR has created its own "Church" also, in the image and likeness of itself. The Soviet kind of "Church" serves only for deception and not for the satisfaction of the religious seekings of the people. When the regime finds it necessary, this Church will cease its existence.

Question: However, most recently there have been changes in this Church. And there are such worthy people there as Father Dimitry Dudko and tens of others.

Answer: The existence in the Soviet Church of Father Dimitry Dudko and certain ones like him is not an apology for it. The Soviet Church has not changed in its essence and it remains the creature of the Soviet regime. The Catacomb Church does not recognize either the Soviet regime or its Church. These are precisely the two basic conditions which brought about the Catacomb Church.

Question: What in your opinion is the number of members of the Catacomb Church?

Answer: No one knows precisely, but I suppose that there are millions. I will give you figures from the secret report of the Inspector of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, E.N. Klimov, who is responsible for checking the atheistic activities of priests. (Yes, that's not a mistake: the atheistic activities of *priests!*) About six years ago at one of its secret reports for teachers (entrance was only by a special pass), he cited two figures: 52 million parishioners in the official Church, and 48 million in the Catacomb Church. How these figures were obtained, and what is meant here by the Catacomb Church, and whether the regime includes here various sects also—this I cannot say. However, I consider that to divide parishioners thus into the Catacomb Church and the official Church is not entirely correct. I know of one Moscow engineer, for example, who goes to services of the official Church but does not receive Communion, and when during the petitions they pray for the government, he reads his own petition for the opposite. In real life the Catacomb and official Churches overlap each other, and it is impossible to make a boundary between them.

The most extreme section of the Catacomb Church is the True Orthodox Christians (TOC). They received me entirely as one of their own, since I had no kind of relations with the regime and did not even have a single worker's ticket. But they will not accept any kind of Communist in their group. For me, this limitation—membership in the Party—should not be a disqualification. If one does not accept Communists, that means one only strengthens them in their own way and drives them away. Father Vlassy, a Catacomb Schema-hieromonk, now reposed, related how through one spiritual son of his a highly-placed Party member appealed to him and asked him to come to give him Communion, and he even sent his own car at night for him. In the house of this man there were splendid ancient icons and an icon lamp. And this Party member said: "I entreat you, judge for yourself: if it is essential that I leave the Party, I will leave the Patty tomorrow. I know what this will mean for me. But if it is possible—then leave everything the way it is, because in soul I am absolutely not a Communist."

Question: Tell us, please, a few words about your last arrest in Kiev (in 1975).

Answer: In a few words, I was arrested for religious samizdat publications. They found nothing on me, since I was arrested on the train, but they found at the house of P.P. Savitsky one of my religious-historical works. At the interrogation I said the following: "Here you have the essence of my crime. There is a law, and judge me according to this law, but I will speak only about myself and not about anyone else." And so they were not able to get anything from me, and I was again sent to camp.

If one were to compare the Soviet camps in the '50's and the '70's, I felt better in the former—and not only because I was younger then. For foreigners the conditions in camp are better than usual; but Russians are plagued the whole day long with loudspeakers: from morning till night, from day to day, one and the same Soviet songs. This wears one out a great deal, since there is nowhere one can escape from it.

Question: How did you manage to get to the West?

Answer: First of all, this was a miracle of God's mercy. I, as a person without citizenship, being deprived in the Soviet Union of foreign citizenship, fought for more than a year to leave the USSR. I wrote three times to Brezhnev something like this: "I'm not "yours" and I will never be yours. You are sending "your own" out of the country and depriving them of Soviet citizenship. With me it is simpler—you don't have to deprive me of anything. For you I am some kind of foreign body. Give me freedom. I have been deprived of freedom already for 35 years. I'm already an old man and sick. Here, I have no one, but there I have relatives. I have already been in camps twice. Do I have to wait for the third time?

And I left chiefly for the following reason: There it seemed to us that abroad people were not understanding the situation of the Catacomb Church in the USSR. The Catacomb Church is the antipodes of the Soviet Church. I would wish to achieve this result: that outside of Russia, at least, there would be accepted some kind of official formulation of a different approach to the official Church on the one hand, and to the Catacomb Church on the other.

I have spoken with some highly-placed representatives of the Church Outside of Russia, but unfortunately I have not obtained a full contact. But I will seek understanding, a creative discussion of sorts, if I am able. I am a small representative of the Catacomb Church, but I am in great debt before her. And I cannot give up these positions—after all, people there are living by them, and for them so many martyrs have shed their blood. And I dare to assure you that the Catacomb people are in the millions.

42

Eugene Vagin

A FEW WORDS ON THE CATACOMB CHURCH IN THE USSR

Eugene Alexandrovich Vagin was one of the founders and active members of the "All-Russian Social-Christian Union for the Liberation of the People," a small group of people in Leningrad who tried to return to the Orthodox and national roots of the Russian people and dreamed of the liberation of Russia from Communism (but with no practical plan for this). In 1967 the Union was uncovered by the KGB and its members were arrested and sent to concentration camps. After serving out his term, Vagin emigrated to the West, where he actively works to inform the Russian emigration and the West of the state of affairs in the Soviet Union.

How many? Are there many of them? This is a constant (and natural) question when there is talk of "dissidents," of the persecution of the faithful, of prisoners. . .

I personally was acquainted with and spoke with approximately twenty representatives of the groups of the so-called Catacomb Church (I speak here exclusively of Orthodox Christians, not touching on the Roman Catholics and Uniates, who also have their "catacombs"). Together with them, if one includes the names of those whom they mentioned or told about, the number exceeds a hundred.

Here is what especially interested me in the accounts of the True Orthodox Christian Wanderers (one of the Orthodox Catacomb groups). For the most part, in accordance with their religious concepts, they live without documents, do not handle Soviet money (on both of which they see the seal of antichrist). Both by the character of their mission and out of practical necessity, they are obliged constantly to be wandering: to go from place to place, to hide from the authorities. And *constantly* and *everywhere* they find people who actively sympathize with them: who help them materially, hide them in case of need, participate in common prayers. This is that good soil in which the seed of preaching is cast, which brings forth a hundredfold for every word. This more than anything else disturbs the atheist authorities. This is evidently why the show-trial was staged in Alma-Ata at the beginning of the 1960's against a group of True Orthodox Christian Wanderers headed by Mina Bogatyrev (described in the Soviet journal *Science and Religion*, 1964, no. 7, p. 24), whom I met in the Mordovo camp in 1968-69...

To give a "panorama" of the present situation of the Catacomb Church in the Soviet Union is difficult for many reasons. First of all, of course, I have at my disposal only a part of the information on this question. Further, I do not have the right even to name all the names known to me. In concentration camps, members of the True Orthodox Church conduct a successful and fruitful work in attracting new people into their ranks; for the most part the converts (who are not always and exclusively young people) become *secret* adherents of the Catacomb Church. And of course, it would be foolish and premature to indicate the geographical regions where True Orthodox believers settle with the aim of being close to each other. Without doubt, some of these regions are known to the KGB, but I think by no means all of them are.

The question of the hierarchy of the Catacomb Church is a very important one. From various persons, including the late A.S. Dubina, who died in a camp last summer, I have heard the dramatic account of the aged Vladika Seraphim who lived in the 30's in the Kharkov region. He lived literally "underground"—in a specially-furnished cellar of a farm house. Here there were regular Divine services of the "Tikhonites" (the adherents of Patriarch Tikhon), and here also Vladika died. His body remained incorrupt for many days, and news of this became so widespread that it came to the NKVD also. A party of Chekists made a surprise attack and conducted a search; they dragged the body of Vladika Seraphim from the cellar and took it in a wagon no one knows where.

Friends of mine in the camps related to me how during the war an aged bishops blessed them not to take weapons into their hands and defend the "conquests of October." They did not mention his name. For this refusal their whole group (seven men) was sentenced to be shot, and only by the repeal of the "extreme measure of punishment" (replaced by 25 years in camp) were they saved from death.

Hieromonk Michael Vasielich Ershov, whom many also called "Vladika,"was not a bishop. He died in a camp hospital (Tengushev district, Barashevo station) in 1974 on the day of the Holy Trinity, and evidently was buried in the nearby camp cemetery. Recent information from the USSR about Hieromonk Ershov, that supposedly after 43 years of imprisonment he was placed in a Kazan psychiatric hospital, is evidently based on a misunderstanding—evidently this was someone else. Incidentally, I do not know of another believer with such an astronomical term of confinement in a camp!

I do not doubt that there are bishops in the Catacomb Church even now, although the number of eight to twelve mentioned, it seems, by A.E. Levitin-Krasnov in one of his interviews seems to me to be exaggerated. But there is something else that deserves special attention: I know for sure that among the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate there are those who *actively* sympathize with the True Orthodox Church. This assertion may sound paradoxical, because the TOC as a whole renounces the hierarchy of the "Soviet Church" and even forbids its adherents to visit the Divine services in "their" churches. However, the position of *individual* Catacomb Christians is softer, and it may be, more far-sighted.

Where do Catacomb Christians conduct church services? From what has been told me I know that before the war they were conducted on the territory of the present-day Tatar ASSR in the open air, near springs in the forest. These Divine services assembled a multitude of believers. Participation in them was strictly punished: at times groups of the militia were posted at places of "assemblies" that had become well known. Therefore, these places had to be changed. At the present time most frequently they gather in the houses of "their own" people, in basement rooms especially furnished as house churches. Small monasteries of the same Catacomb type are also not rare.

In camp conditions we had to think up all possible means for performing public prayer. Most often we would pray under the open sky in groups of three of four people, as if walking, so as to attract the least attention. Sometimes we managed to assemble in a "productive zone," in a large covered barracks after the end of work. This was possible only when working on the second shift, when the control was a little weaker and the supervisors appeared less often.

On the eve of great feasts—especially on the Bright Resurrection of Christ—we would gather in groups of eight or nine in auxiliary buildings, before wake-up time, for about thirty or forty minutes, no longer. At such meetings the Gospel was always read, usually by everyone present in turn; prayers were also read, and there would be a common table.

At prayers we unfailingly commemorated (these small commemoration books were given out to write "our own" names in) all the members of the murdered Royal Family, His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, the murdered Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoyavlensky) of Kiev, and we read a long list of "Tikhonites" who died and were martyred in prisons and camps. The lists of names varied, since we would commemorate the ones we knew personally. The members of our families and our nearest relatives were also commemorated. In prayers for the living it was suggested that we commemorate first of all our parents and spiritual father. I also came across lists with the commemoration of Metropolitan Philaret of the Russian Church Outside of Russia. Information about the "Karlovtsi,"* of course, is incomplete and not always precise in the camps (and in general in the Soviet Union); but on the whole the attitude of the True Orthodox to it is entirely well disposed.

What influence does the Catacomb Church have on the Orthodox faithful in general? People know about it, but not nearly enough: there is almost no information in the press, and in the Russian programs of Western radio there is almost nothing about this Church. Believers from among the educated youth—and these have become more and more in recent years—show great interest in the subject of religious persecutions; here they come across the question of the True Orthodox Church and wish to know more about it. It should be noted that many young educated people are repulsed by the emphasized "anti-intellectualism" of the True Orthodox.

This "anti-intellectualism" sometimes takes the form of a conscious foolishness for Christ's sake. I emphasize: *conscious*. I was told of this by one of the most remarkable Orthodox Christians whom I have had the pleasure of meeting—I mean V.V. Kalinin. He had spent already 25 years in imprisonment. His conduct was a radical denial of the whole style of life and thought bound up with the present truly diabolical political regime. And this form of conduct is by no means a simple "political protest."

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*A name given to the Russian Church Outside of Russia by its enemies, taken from the city in Yugoslavia which was its headquarters in the 1920's and '30's.

Monarchist sentiments, which dominate among the members of the True Orthodox Church, evoke sympathy in circles of young people; young people also are well disposed to them because they have voluntarily chosen for themselves the path of suffering, patiently bearing for decades the cross of martyrdom.

All of the True Orthodox to one degree or another are characterized by a feeling of national and spiritual exaltation. This is especially to be felt in the "Testament" of M.V. Ershov, published in *Russian Life* (July 7, 1977). All members of this Church, even the "uneducated," are characterized by a special suffering over the fate of Russia, which is placed by them in the center of all the world's events (this is often interpreted in a very original way, always in apocalyptic, eschatological tones). Their "Russianness" is not set aggressively against other nations and peoples, but is accepted inwardly and in confidential conversations, as a sign of a "special chosenness." I have often heard in their midst the old proverb applied to the fate of Russia: "Whom the Lord loves more, He makes to suffer more."

The religious "intolerance" of the members of the TOC is of a special sort. Thus, for example, they are absolutely intolerant towards the "Soviet Church." For them it is the image of the harlot in the wilderness on the scarlet beast (Apoc. 17:2-3). But their attitude towards Catholics—their companions in suffering and brothers in faith—is not only deprived of any hostility whatever, but is distinguished by a special heartfelt warmth and good wishes. This is especially noticeable among the old prisoners who have suffered many common sufferings together with them. For us young people this was a great example.

VI

Documents of the Russian Church Abroad on the Catacomb Church

We reverently bow down before your exploit
and say to you as younger brothers: You are the light
of the contemporary world which has gone astray
and lies in sin; you are the salt of the earth;
you are those ten righteous ones for whose sake
the Lord endures our sins.

Epistle of the free Council of Bishops
of the Church Abroad, 1975

43

The Catacomb Church

EPISTLE OF METROPOLITAN PHILARET TO ORTHODOX BISHOPS AND ALL WHO HOLD DEAR THE FATE OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH[1]

In recent days the Soviet Government in Moscow and various parts of the world celebrated a new anniversary of the October Revolution of 1917 which brought it to power.

We, on the other hand, call to mind in these days the beginning of the way of the cross for the Russian Orthodox Church, upon which from that time, as it were, all the powers of hell have fallen.

Meeting resistance on the part of Archpastors, pastors, and laymen strong in spirit, the Communist power, in its fight with religion, began from the very first days the attempt to weaken the Church not only by killing those of her leaders who were strongest in spirit, but also by means of the artificial creation of schisms.

Thus arose the so-called "Living Church" and the renovation movement, which had the character of a Church tied to a Protestant-Communist reformation. Notwithstanding the support of the Government, this schism was crushed by the inner power of the Church. It was too clear to believers that the "Renovated Church" was uncanonical and altered Orthodoxy. For this reason people did not follow it.

The second attempt, after the death of Patriarch Tikhon and the arrest of the *locum tenens* of the patriarchal throne, Metropolitan Peter, had greater success. The Soviet power succeded in 1927 in sundering in part the inner unity of the Church. By confinement in prison, torture, and special methods, it broke the will of the vicar of the patriarchal *locum tenens*, Metropolitan Sergy, and secured from him the proclamation of a declaration of the complete loyalty of the Church to the Soviet power, even to the point where the joys and successes of the Soviet Union were declared by the Metropolitan to the joys and successes of the Church, and its failures to be her failures. What can be more blasphemous than such an idea, which was justly appraised by many at that time as an attempt to unite light with darkness, and Christ with Belial. Both Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter, as well as others who served as *locum tenens* of the Patriarchal throne, had earlier refused to sign a similar declaration, for which they were subjected to arrest, imprisonment, and banishment.

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[1] *Orthodox Russia*, 1965, no. 22.

Protesting against this declaration -- which was proclaimed by Metr. Sergy by himself alone, without the agreement of the suppressed majority of the episcopate of the Russian Church, violating thus the 34th Apostolic Rule[1] -- many bishops who were then in the death camp at Solovki[2] wrote to the Metropolitan: "Any government can sometimes make decisions that are foolish, unjust, cruel, to which the Church is forced to submit, but which she cannot rejoice over or approve. One of the aims of the Soviet Government is the extirpation of religion, but the Church cannot acknowledge its successes in this direction as her own successes" (Open Letter from Solovki, Sept. 27, 1927).

The courageous majority of the sons of the Russian Church did not accept the declaration of Metr. Sergy, considering that a union of the Church with the godless Soviet State. which had set itself the goal of annihilating Christianity in general, could not exist on principle.

But a schism nonetheless occurred. The minority, accepting the declaration, formed a central administration, the so-called "Moscow Patriarchate," which, while being supposedly officially recognized by the authorities, in actual fact received no legal rights whatever from them; for they continued, now without hindrance, a most cruel persecution of the Church. In the words of Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd,

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[1] Which reads: *The bishops of every nation must acknowledge him who is first among them and account him as their head, and do nothing of consequence without his consent... But neither let him who is the first do anything without the consent of all...*

[2] Solovki: the Solovetski Islands in the White Sea, where one of Russia's greatest coenobitic monasteries was situated. Founded by Sts. Zossima and Savvati in the 15th century, the Transfiguration Monastery was the heart of the "Northern Thebaid" and a source of Christian enlightenment and culture for the whole of the northern regions. After the Revolution of 1917 the Soviet Government turned the monastery into a forced-labor concentration camp, where thousands of innocent clergymen and laymen died, enriching with their martyrs' blood the already rich hagiography of the holy islands.

Metr. Sergy, having proclaimed the declaration, entered upon the path of "monstrous arbitrariness, flattery, and betrayal of the Church to the interests of atheism and the destruction of the Church."

The majority, renouncing the declaration, began an illegal ecclesiastical existence. Almost all the bishops were tortured and killed in death camps, among them the *locum tenens* Metr. Peter, Metr. Cyril of Kazan, who was respected by all, and Metr. Joseph of Petrograd, who was shot to death at the end of 1938, as well as many other bishops and thousands of priests, monks, nuns, and courageous laymen. Those bishops and clergy who miraculously remained alive began to live illegally and to serve Divine services secretly, hiding themselves from the authorities and originating in this fashion the *Catacomb Church* in the Soviet Union.

Little news of this Church has come to the free world. The Soviet press long kept silent about her, wishing to give the impression that all believers in the USSR stood behind the Moscow Patriarchate. They even attempted to deny entirely the existence of the Catacomb Church.

But then, after the death of Stalin and the exposure of his activity, and especially after the fall of Khrushchev, the Soviet press has begun to write more and more often on the secret Church in the USSR, calling it the "sect" of *True-Orthodox Christians*. It was apparently impossible to keep silent about it any longer; its numbers are too great and it causes the authorities too much alarm.

Unexpectedly in the "Atheist Dictionary" (State Political Literature Publishers, Moscow, 1964), on pp 123 and 124 the *Catacomb* Church is openly discussed. "*True-Orthodox Christians*," we read in the "Dictionary," "an *Orthodox* sect, originating in the years 1922-24. It was organized in 1927, when Metr. Sergy proclaimed the principle of loyalty to the Soviet power." "Monarchist" (we would say ecclesiastical) "elements, having united around Metr. Joseph (Petrovykh) of Leningrad" (Petrograd) "--*Josephites*," or, as the same Dictionary says, *Tikhonites*, "formed in 1928 a *guiding center, the True-Orthodox Church*, and united all groups and elements which came out against the Soviet order" (we may add from ourselves, "atheist" order). "The *True-Orthodox Church* directed into the villages a multitude of monks and nuns," for the most part of course priests, we add again from ourselves, who celebrated Divine services and rites secretly and "conducted propaganda against the leadership of the Orthodox Church," *i.e.*, against the Moscow Patriarchate which had given in to the Soviet power, "appealing to people not to submit to Soviet laws," which are directed, quite apparently, against the Church of Christ and faith.

By the testimony of the "Atheist Dictionary," the *True-Orthodox Christians* organized and continue to organize "house," *i.e.*, secret, "*catacomb* churches and monasteries... preserving in full the doctrine and rites of Orthodoxy." They "do not acknowledge the authority of the Orthodox Patriarch," *i.e.*, the successor of Metr. Sergy, Patriarch Alexy.

"Striving to fence off" the *True-Orthodox Christians* "from the influence of Soviet reality," chiefly of course from atheist propaganda, "their leaders... make use of the myth of *Antichrist*, who has supposedly been ruling in the world since 1917." The anti-Christian nature of the Soviet power is undoubted for any sound-thinking person, and all the more for a Christian.

True-Orthodox Christians "usually refuse to participate in elections," which in the Soviet Union, a country deprived of freedom, are simply a comedy, "and other public functions; they do not accept pensions, do not allow their children to go to school beyond the fourth class..." Here is an unexpected Soviet testimony of the truth, to which nothing need be added.

Honor and praise to the *True-Orthodox Christians* -- heroes of the spirit and confessors, who have not bowed before the terrible power, which can stand only by terror and force and has become accustomed to the abject flattery of its subjects. The Soviet rulers fall into a rage over the fact that there exist people who fear God more than men. They are powerless before the millions of *True Orthodox Christians*.

However, besides the *True-Orthodox Church* in the Soviet Union and the Moscow Patriarchate, which have communion neither of prayer nor of any other kind with each other, there exists yet a third part of the Russian Church -- free from oppression and persecution by the atheists -- the *Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia*. She has never broken the spiritual and prayerful bonds with the Catacomb Church in the homeland. After the last war many members of this Church appeared abroad and entered into the Russian Church Outside Russia, and thus the bond between these two Churches was strengthened yet more - a bond which has been sustained illegally up to the present time. As time goes on, it becomes all the stronger and better established.

The part of the Russian Church that is abroad and free is called upon to speak in the free world in the name of the persecuted Catacomb Church in the Soviet Union; she reveals to all the truly tragic condition of believers in the USSR, which the atheist power so carefully hushes up, with the aid of the Moscow Patriarchate; she calls on those who have not lost shame and conscience to help the persecuted.

This is why it is our sacred duty to watch over the existence of the *Russian Church Outside of Russia*. The Lord, the searcher of hearts, having permitted His Church to be subjected to oppression, persecution, and deprivation of all rights in the godless Soviet State, has given us, Russian exiles, in the free world the talent of *freedom*, and He expects from us the increase of this talent and a skillful use of it. And we have not the right to hide it in the earth. Let no one dare to say to us that we should do this, let no one push us to a mortal sin.

For the fate of our Russian Church we, Russian bishops, are responsible before God, and no one in the world can free us from this sacred obligation. No one can understand better than we what is happening in our homeland, of which no one can have any doubt. Many times foreigners, even Orthodox people and those vested with high ecclesiastical rank, have made gross errors in connection with the Russian Church and false conclusions concerning her present condition. May God forgive them this, since they do not know what they are doing.

This is why, whether it pleases anyone or not, the *Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia* will continue to exist and will raise her voice in the defense of the faith.

She will not be silent:

1. As long as the Soviet power shall conduct a merciless battle against the Church and believers, about which the whole Soviet press also testifies, except for the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*.

2. As long as, by the testimony of the same press, there exists in the USSR a *secret, Catacomb True-Orthodox Church*, by its very existence testifying to persecutions against the faith and to complete absence of freedom of religion.

3. As long as the Soviet power shall force the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate manifestly to lie and affirm that there are no persecutions against the Church in the USSR and that the Church there supposedly enjoys complete freedom in accordance with the Soviet constitution (Metropolitans Pimen, Nicodim, John of New York, Archbp. Alexy, and others).

4. As long as the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, at the demand of the authorities, does not mention even a single church that has been closed and destroyed, while at the same time Soviet newspapers speak of hundreds and thousands.

5. As long as churches in the USSR shall be defiled by atheists, being converted into movie-houses, storehouses, museums, clubs, apartments, etc., of which fact there are living witnesses in the persons of tourists who have been to Soviet Union.

6. Until the thousands of destroyed and defiled churches shall be restored as churches of God.

7. Until the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate in clerical robes shall cease agitating in the free world in the interest of the godless Soviet power, in this way dressing the wolf in sheep's clothing.

8. Until the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate end their evil denial of the terrible and dreadful devastation of the Pochaev Lavra and other monasteries, and stop the almost complete liquidation of monks there and the terrible persecutions of her pilgrims, even to killing and murder (letters from the USSR).[1]

9. Until priests accused by Soviet courts shall receive the right to defend themselves freely though the Soviet press.

10. Until there shall cease calumny and ridicule of faith, the Church, priests, monks, and believing Christians in the Soviet press.

11. Until freedom shall be given to every believer in the USSR openly to confess his faith and defend it.

12. Until it shall be officially permitted children and young people to know the foundations of their faith, to visit the churches of God, to participate in Divine services aad receive communion of the Holy Mysteries.

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[1] See *The Orthodox Word*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 105ff.

13. Until it shall be permitted parents who are believers to baptize their children without hindrance and without sad consequences for their official careers and personal happiness.

14. Until parents who raise their children religiously shall cease from being accused of crippling them, parents and children both being deprived of freedom for this and shut up in mental institutions or prison.

15. Until freedom of thought, speech, action, and voting shall be given not only to every believer, but also to every citizen of the Soviet Union, first of all to writers and creative thinkers, against whom the godless power is now waging an especially bitter battle using intolerable means.

16. Until the *Church* and religious societies in general in the USSR shall receive the most elementary rights, if only the right to be a legal person before Soviet laws, the right to own property, to direct one's own affairs in actual fact, to designate and transfer rectors of parishes and priests, to open and dedicate new churches, to preach Christianity openly not only in churches, but outside them also, especially among young people, *etc.* In other words, until the condition of all religious societies shall cease from being, one and the same, *without rights*.

Until all this shall come about, we shall not cease to accuse the godless persecutors of faith and those who evilly cooperate with them under the exterior of supposed representatives of the Church. In this the Russian Church Outside of Russia has always seen one of her important tasks. Knowing this, the Soviet power through its agents wages with her a stubborn battle, not hesitating to use any means: lies, bribes, gifts, and intimidation. We, however, shall not suspend our accusation.

Declaring this before the face of the whole world, I appeal to all our brothers in Christ -- *Orthodox bishops* -- and to all people who hold dear the fate of the persecuted Russian Church as a part of the Universal Church of Christ, for understanding, support, and their holy prayers. As for our spiritual children, we call on them to hold firmly to the truth of Orthodoxy, witnessing of her both by one's word and especially by a prayerful, devout Christian life.

44

The True Orthodox Church and the Russian Church Abroad

Resolution of the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (*Sept.* 1|14, 1971)

THE SOBOR OF BISHOPS of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, the only free part of the Russian Church, looks with sorrow upon the sufferings to which believers are subjected within the boundaries of the Soviet Union. To the open persecutions of the atheistic regime, which sets as its aim the extermination of all religion, there are added temptations from false brethren.

In 1927, when the late Metropolitan of Nizhegorod, Sergius, who called himself Patriarch of Moscow, issued his well-known Declaration, the elder bishops of the Russian Church, and among them those chosen by Patriarch Tikhon in his testament for temporary leadership of the Russian Church, did not agree with him, seeing the ruinousness for Orthodox souls of the new course along which he was leading the Church, against the instructions of Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk. The names of Metropolitans Peter, Cyril, Arsenius, Joseph, Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich, and many other hierarchs, clerics, and laymen will enter the history of the Church on an equal par with the most celebrated confessors of Orthodoxy in the face of persecutions, impiety, and heresies.

TRUE ORTHODOX CHURCH

The free part of the Russian Church, which finds itself outside the boundaries of the USSR, is heart and soul with the confessors of the faith, whom the anti-religious guidebooks call "True Orthodox Christians," and who in common usage are often called "the Catacomb Church"; for they are obliged to hide themselves from the civil authorities in the same way that believers hid in the catacombs in the first centuries of Christianity. The Sobor of Bishops acknowledges its spiritual unity with them, and the Russian Church Outside of Russia always prays for all those who under conditions of persecution manage to preserve the truth and are *not unequally yoked with unbelievers*, recognizing that there is nothing in common between light and darkness and no agreement between Christ and Belial (II Cor. 6.14-15).

The free part of the Russian Church, besides praying, strives to help its brethren who suffer for the Faith in the Homeland also by continually striving to reveal to the world the true situation of the Church in the Soviet Union, unmasking the lie of her supposed well-being, which false pastors, travelling abroad, attempt to spread there, glorifying the persecutors and disparaging the persecuted.

In the painful circumstances which our brethren in the Soviet Union must experience, we find a consolation in the example of the first centuries of Christianity, when the persecutors of Christ likewise attempted physically to exterminate the Holy Church. But we remember the encouraging words of the Saviour, *Fear not, little flock* (Luke 12:32). And we remember likewise the Saviour's words of encouragement for those whom the Lord has judged to be on this earth in the last days of its existence: *Then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh* (Luke 21:28).

45

Archimandrite Tavrion

Issue no. 96 of *The Orthodox Word* (Jan.-Feb., 1981) contained the life of Archimandrite Tavrion, the last Elder of Glinsk Hermitage before its closure in 1958, who died in 1978 as spiritual father of the nuns of the Holy Transfiguration Hermitage near Riga. Renowned as an Elder among believers in many parts of Russia, Father Tavrion reminds one of Fr. Dimitry Dudko (with whom he was in contact) in his Orthodox fervor and his outspokenness with regard to the Soviet authorities; his life gives us a glimpse of Holy Russia surviving even in the terrible Soviet reality of today's Russia.

This life was sent to *The Orthodox Word* for publication by Metropolitan Philaret, Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, together with a letter explaining that "this wise and pious elder belonged at first to the Catacomb Church; but seeing how the believing people were scattered like sheep without a shepherd, he joined the official church, but in his activity he stood absolutely apart from it, giving all his strength to the spiritual guidance of believing souls."

Some believers, especially among non-Russians in America, interpreted such sympathy shown for a priest of the Moscow Patriarchate as a "betrayal" of the Catacomb Church and wrote letters of protest to the Synod of Bishops in New York City. The Synod, in reply, proclaimed the following "Decision" which sets forth clearly an unchanged policy of communion only with the Catacomb Church in Russia, but sympathy and lack of condemnation for all those in the Moscow Patriarchate who are trying in the best way they know to be faithful to Orthodoxy "even in the territory of Antichrist's kingdom." This "Decision" shows that the attitude of the free Russian Church in the West towards religious events in Russia is not at all narrow and legalistic, but is filled with love and compassion in addition to uncompromising church principle.

DECISION OF BISHOPS

On 12/25 August, 1981, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia heard the report of the President of the Synod of Bishops on the following matter: the appearance of an article about Archimandrite Tavrion published in issue number 96 of *The Orthodox Word* has caused great constemation among some readers, especially those who are not very familiar with the conditions of church life in the USSR. In my covering letter to the editor of the magazine (which was not intended to be published with the article), they saw what they believed to be a kind of approval of the dual position taken by the late archimandrite rather than the simple forwarding of some interesting, informative material. Archimandrite Tavrion, after long years of imprisonment as a member of the Catacomb Church, somehow came to join the Moscow Patriarchate while never sharing its policies. None of us has ever had any relations with him. We only know that he advised those of his spiritual children leaving the USSR and going West to join the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. It is also known that when talking to his spiritual children, he condemned the political subservience of the Patriarchate to the atheistic authorities. His pastoral and spiritual methods were rather unusual. In the favorable description of his life written by his spiritual daughter, some readers found not only the fact that he brought people into the Church, but they also suspected us of approving his compromising attitude toward the Church. This is not true

The condemnation by our hierarchy of the agreement with the atheists promulgated by the Moscow Patriarchate at the time of Metropolitan Sergius certainly remains in effect and cannot be changed except by the repentance of the Moscow Patriarchate. This policy, which seeks to serve both Christ and Belial, is unquestionably a betrayal of Orthodoxy. Therefore, we can have no liturgical communion with any bishop or cleric of the Moscow Patriarchate. But this does not prevent us from studying with love and sorrow the religious life in Russia. In some cases we see a complete collapse while in others we see some efforts to remain outside the apostate policies of the Patriarchate's leaders in an attempt to attain salvation even in the territory of Antichrist's kingdom (as in the case mentioned in Canon 11 of St. Athanasius), and bearing in mind the words of our Saviour that by a hasty judgment one might root up the wheat along with the tares (Mat. 13:29). Under varying circumstances, the venom of sinful compromise poisons the soul in varying degrees.

As the free part of the Russian Church, we can fully approve only that part of the Church in Russia which is called the Catacomb Church, and only with her can we have full communion. Yet any departure from atheism and "Sergianism" must be seen as a positive step towards pure Orthodoxy even though it not yet be the opening of the way to ecclesiastical union with us. Beyond this, our present evaluation and judgment cannot proceed, due to lack of information. However, our interest in all aspects of religious life in Russia cannot ignore any positive event we see against the background of total apostasy. We should not focus our attention exclusively on those facts which merit unconditional condemnation.

In light of this, the life and activity of the late Archimandrite Tavrion was an interesting phenomenon. And for this reason, I found his biography worthy of attention and publication while certainly disapproving his membership in the Sergian church organization. This was apparently misunderstood by some readers: I was not offering his example as worthy of imitation.

RESOLVED: To take into consideration the report of the President of the Synod of Bishops and, sharing his opinion, to publish his account in the religious press. At the same time, the Synod of Bishops deems it necessary to remind its flock that first of all, we must strongly uphold our own faith and exercise our zeal in the authentic life of the Church under the conditions in which God has placed each one of us, striving towards the salvation of our souls. Due to insufficient information, deliberations about the significance and quality of various events in Russia do not at present provide adequate guidance for the faithful. Indeed, in the majority of cases these deliberations cannot serve as instruction but must rather be regarded as personal opinions.

The Synod of Bishops is grieved by the reaction to the article about Archimandrite Tavrion and the hasty conclusions which some zealous believers, and even some clergymen, have drawn. Mutual love and concern for Church unity, which is especially necessary in times of heresy and schism, require from each of us great caution in what we say. If no one is supposed to condemn his neighbor in haste, even more care is demanded where our own primate is concerned. Rash implications about his allegedly unorthodox preaching as well as open criticism in sermons reveal a tendency towards condemnation and division which is unseemly in Christians. The Apostle said, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" How much more appropriate might it be to say. "Who art thou that judgest thy metropolitan?" Such an attitude, which can easily develop into schism, is strongly censured by the canons of the Church, for it shows willful appropriation by clerics of the "Judgment belonging to metropolitans" (Canon XIII of the First-and-Second Council). Everyone must be very careful in his criticism, particularly when expressing it publicly, remembering that "Judgment and justice take hold *on thee*" (Job 36:17). If, contrary to the apostolic teaching about hierarchical distribution of duties and responsibilities, all the clerics and laymen were to supervise their hierarchs (1 Cor. 12:28-30), then instead of being a hierarchical Body of Christ, our Church would turn into a kind of democratic anarchy where the sheep assume the function of the shepherd. A special grace is bestowed upon bishops to help them in their work. Those who seek to control their bishop should be reminded of Canon LXIV of the Sixth Ecumenical Council which quotes the words of St. Gregory the Theologian:

> *Learning in docility and abounding in cheerfulness, and ministering with alacrity, we shall not all be the tongue which is the more active member, not all of us apostles, not all prophets, nor shall we all interpret. Why dost thou make thyself a shepherd when thou art a sheep? Why become a head when thou art a foot? Why dost thou try to be a commander when thou art enrolled in the number of the soldiers?*

The canon ends with the following words:

> *But if anyone be found weakening the present canon, he is to be cut off for forty days.*

The situation of the Church in Russia is without precedent, and no norms can be prescribed by any one of us separately. If the position of the Catacomb Church would change relative to its position in past years, any change in our attitude would have to be reviewed not by individual clergymen or laymen but only by the Council of Bishops, to which all pertinent matters should be submitted.

The above decision must be published and a copy of it forwarded to the Secretariat of the Council while the diocesan bishops should give instructions, each in his own diocese, to the clerics who have too hastily voiced their opinion.

APPENDIX I

Archbishop John of Latvia

Commemorated October 12 (†1934)

AMONG THE GLORIOUS NEW-MARTYRS of our own century, some stand out from the others by the absolute clarity of their stand for Christ and His Church. They are not martyrs "incidentally," as merely a part of the universal campaign of the pseudo-religious phenomenon of Communism against the Church of Christ; rather, they are open and fearless confessors of Christ, whose very life is a bold challenge to the modern persecutors, even as was St. Anthony's life to the demons of the Egyptian desert. Such, within Russia, were Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and other founders of the Catacomb Church; and such, outside of Russia, was Archbishop John, the chief confessor and martyr of the much-suffering Latvian Orthodox Church.

Archbishop John was born Janis Pommer in 1876 in a peasant family in the district of Vendzen, Latvia. There was no Russian blood in his ancestry, even though later he revealed such a great love for Russia. His great-grandfather was one of the first to accept the Orthodox Faith in this region, for which he was subjected to a severe persecution. At that time there was a great interest in Orthodoxy among the peasants of Lithlandia, thanks to the preaching which had been begun in the Latvian language. The Lutheran pastors, for the most part, looked upon the local inhabitants and their language with disdain, and the Latvians, who at one time had been forcibly baptized as Catholics by the German invaders, after the Reformation had just as automatically been made Lutherans, following their lords. Those who had gone over to Orthodoxy in the middle of the last century were regarded by the local authorities (the German Barons) as rebels. The local inhabitants showed their attitude toward the

Archbishop John when a young Bishop

Archbishop John during the Great Blessing of the Water in the Riga Cathedral "rebel" by making a mound over the place of his burial and erecting the Orthodox eight-pointed Cross on it. Both the mound and the Cross were later removed by the local authorities.

In his childhood, the future Archbishop helped his parents on the farm and was a shepherd. He was a serious boy, avoiding the noisy games of other children, and as a teenager he loved to go into the forest and stay there for a long time. His father taught him reading and writing so well that, skipping primary school, he entered directly into the state upper school. From his very first year in school he was so outstanding in his studies that his teachers fervently recommended to his parents that he be sent either to the Gymnasium or to the seminary preparatory school. At the advice of the local priest the boy was sent to the latter. After passing the examination, he entered the seminary preparatory school in 1887; in 1891 he transferred to the Riga seminary. Owing to his success in his studies and his good behavior, he received a scholarship during the whole time of his study. He always spent his summer vacations at home helping his parents in the farm labors.

He finished the seminary course in 1897, and finished it brilliantly. The disorders which came upon the Russian educational institutions at that time hindered him from continuing his education immediately. For three years he worked as an instructor among the Latvian people, showing here great talent as a teacher. In 1900, having passed the entrance examinations brilliantly, he was accepted as a student in the Kiev Theological Academy, again on a scholarship. He was popular among the students, both for his outstanding success in his studies and as a hero in the realm of sports. For those who knew him well, however, the monastic tonsure of the young student in 1901 in the Archangel Michael Monastery of Kiev, was not unexpected. His companions, even before he was tonsured, called him "monk" for his devotion to the idea of absolute sobriety and, in general, for his strict continence in everything.

He finished the course of the Academy in 1904 so brilliantly that he was given a choice between a scholarly career and practical work as a teacher. He chose the latter. As an instructor of Holy Scripture in the Chernigov Seminary, he was able to inspire his students to such an extent that several of them devoted their lives to the study of the Sacred Scripture and later became professors of this subject. The seminary authorities also valued the labors of the young instructor, and in 1906 they promoted him to the post of Inspector of the Vologda Seminary. In the Vologda Seminary the future Archbishop also showed his ability as an administrator. The good order which he was able to bring in a very short time to the populous and disordered Vologda Seminary was so exceptional that, despite his young age, he was entrusted in the next academic year with the responsible position of Rector of the Orthodox Seminary of Lithuania and Superior of the Holy Trinity Monastery of Vilna. He was also given responsible assignments in the diocesan government. Therefore, his transfer in 1911 to Minsk, where the ailing Archbishop Michael of Minsk called him to the post of vicar bishop, was met in Vilna with regret by everyone. On his way to Minsk he participated in the canonization of St. Ioasaph of Belgorod.

In 1912 Bishop John was transferred to Odessa as a vicar of the Archbihop of Chersones, Demetrius, who was then very old. With the new year of 1913 he was given the responsible assignment of establishing in good order the newly-opened diocese of Priyazovsk. His relationship with the local inhabitants here was so good that this diocese became the only one in Russia in which his salary and that of his clergy was taken by the local people upon themselves. During his four years (until 1917) as head of this diocese, which embraced a so-called mining district, the energetic pastor visited all its corners. There were occasions when the Bishop was chosen as arbitrator when there were conflicts between the workers and the employers. The workers considered him the defender of their interests, and the employers submitted to his decisions without discussion. When, in connection with the War, waves of refugees from Galicia and Czechoslovakia reached the "Quiet Don," they found in Bishop John one who took great care for their needs. Many refugee schools and orphanages were organized with his participation. Hundreds of grateful Galicians and Czechs became Orthodox, including the intelligentsia.

The Revolution found Bishop John in this post. He was dangerous to the revolutionary leaders, and the campaign against him began immediately.

Both open and secret revolutionary agents followed him everywhere. Meanwhile, among the masses of people who were entirely devoted to their bishop, there was formed an attitude that was not acceptable to the local revolutionary authorities. Volunteers from among the workers and the soldiers organized a guard which watched over the bishop day and night. On his way to and from Divine services he was accompanied by great masses of people who were prepared to defend their bishop by force against enemies. The local revolutionary authority thought that it had found a way out by arranging the transfer of the beloved archpastor to the diocese of Tver. But after the final service in the cathedral church, the people returned their bishop by force to the episcopal residence and surrounded him with guards who were to prevent the departure or taking away of the bishop. Under such conditions the authorities in humiliation asked the bishop to leave the city for a time and go to Moscow. However, together with Bishop John a delegation from the people went to Moscow, representing the clergy, laymen, soldiers, and Cossacks, with the intention of protesting there against the actions of the local authority. In Moscow the delegation obtained its end with a favorable decision from both the secular and the spiritual authority. But the Bolshevik coup and the beginning of the civil war made the return of Bishop John to Priyazov impossible. Accordingly, he was assigned to the responsible position of Archbishop of Penza.

In Penza, where Archbishop John arrived at the beginning of 1918, the believers immediately undertook the organization of the defense of their archpastor from both the secular authorities and the church modernists. Again a volunteer guard was formed. The local Cheka immediately subjected the Archbishop to search and interrogation; but neither the one nor the other gave any reason for arrest. Then the Cheka agents decided to mark the celebration of Pascha in 1918 with the murder of Archbishop John.

In the evening of Pascha there appeared at the Archbishop's residence in the Transfiguration Monastery two Cheka agents armed to the teeth, the former officer Rudakov and the worker Dubovkin, and they began to demand access to him. The guard sounded the alarm to warn the people, and Duhovkin fled, but Rudakov broke down the door of the cell and fired several shots which were, fortunately, wide of the mark. The Archbishop succeeded in disarming him. The people who had gathered by this time intended to take care of the criminal by lynch law, and only the energetic intercession of the Archbishop saved Rudakov from certain death. And here a miracle occurred: Rudakov, who had just made an attempt against the life of the Archbishop, threw himself on his neck with the Paschal greeting, "Christ is risen!" Naturally the authorities were swift to deny any participation in this matter, despite the fact that Rudakov had a written order on his person. The unfortunate man was arrested and soon died in prison. Pascha week in Penza and in all this vast diocese was turned into an unheard-of demonstration of the love and devotion of the faithful for their shepherd. The authorities, calculating the situation, concealed themselves for a while and refrained from any obvious steps. The faithful, including even the liberal circles of the local intelligentsia, formed themselves even more tightly around their archpastor. The important local lawyer, V.A. Bezsonov, the Archbishop's legal advisor, became the head of these zealots and was his Subdeacon. Church life in the whole diocese was brought to life and strengthened.

When in May, 1918, a regiment of Czechoslovakians was going from the Don to Siberia through Penza, the Bolsheviks suddenly, for no reason, opened artillery fire against the Transfiguration Monastery. The place where the Archbishop was living became the center of fire. Later the authorities explained this incident as a misunderstanding, but the local people accepted this as an attempt against the life of their archpastor, and they protested. On September 7, 1918, the local Cheka again made a long search of the Archbishop's cell and office. Even though nothing incriminating was found, the Cheka agents took the Archbishop to prison for a confrontation with one of the prisoners. This caused the Archbishop to be late for the All-night Vigil of the Nativity of the Mother of God. When the believers found out that the Archbishop had been taken to the "house of no return," and on the day when executions were performed, those who had come to the service decided that the Archbishop had been shot together with the other condemned ones. When

Vladika returned very late to the Cathedral, instead of the All-night Vigil he found in progress a requiem service for himself.

For its next provocation the authorities made use of the local representative of the "New Church," V. Putyatu-Gruenstein, who, on September 14, appeared at the Sts. Peter and Paul Church with his followers when Archbishop John was performing the Divine service. They made an attempt to enter the church, but the people prevented this. Because of the disorders around the church the Archbishop also was imprisoned by the local Cheka as one under suspicion. He was kept in prison for a whole month despite his obvious innocence. From one day to the next the local Cheka was besieged by delegations of the faithful demanding the liberation of the Archbishop. Prayers were offered in the whole diocese for this. All of this caused the Cheka to stop their case against the Archbishop. On October 14 at midnight the Cheka agents began to call the prisoners, one by one, to the hall of the tribune to hear and sign the sentences. It was a Saturday, the day on which executions were usually performed. Those who were called went out and did not return. They were given immediately to the executioners. On the long list of the doomed, Archbishop John was the very last. This was a subtle torture: he had to suffer everything that is suffered by those who are condemned to death. About one o'clock in the morning he was finally informed that he was freed.

On July 18, 1919, the authorities called the Archbishop to the military headquarters, where he was examined and pronounced fit for military service, being assigned to a regiment in the rear. A postponement of this was won, thanks only to the intercession of the faithful. When, at the end of 1919, the White troops began to draw near to Penza from the south, the authorities hastily arrested the most visible Church people. On November 11 the Cheka agents conducted a new search in the Archbishop's cell, this time an especially careful one. Although nothing was found, the Archbishop was again arrested. The Cheka declared that a mythical counter-revolutionary organization had been discovered, the "members" of which were immediately executed. Bezsonov, Vladika's subdeacon, was among their number. In reply to the categorical protest of the Archbishop, he was sent to Moscow where his case was to be examined. His case was taken by the president himself of the Secret Operations Division of the Cheka, the famous Latsis (a fellow-countryman of the Archbishop, who eventually perished himself in the underground rooms which he knew so well). This time the Archbishop was imprisoned for three months. The agents did not manage to collect or fabricate any incriminating material at all, and on March 11, 1920, he was freed.

IN FEBRUARY 3, 1920, Archbishop John was elected by a council of the Latvian Orthodox Church as Archbishop of Riga and All Latvia. Latvia, which until the Revolution was a part of the Russian Empire, suffered greatly the effects of the First World War and the disorders in Russia. Already in 1919 (January 14), Archbishop Platon of Revel had died a martyr's death in neighboring Estonia at the hands of Bolsheviks. Although the Communist threat receded for some two decades from the Baltic countries, still the Orthodox Faith in newly-independent Latvia was looked at by the government as something which had lived out its time and was now superfluous. The Cathedral Church of Riga, which under the German occupation had been turned into a Lutheran church, and had then twice been damaged in military action, was returned to the Orthodox, but since it was a reminder of Russian rule it now stood sealed. The bishop's residence and the St. Alexis Monastery were given to the Catholics, and other church properties were confiscated by the government and turned to secular uses. The Orthodox Christians not only in Riga, but also in all the cities and towns of Latvia, found themselves in terrible conditions, without a shepherd, persecuted, totally without rights. A systematic attempt was made to uproot the Orthodox Faith. Under these painful conditions, the Orthodox Latvians could have done no better than to choose as their archpastor Archbishop John, who was not only the most eminent Orthodox Church figure of Latvian blood at that time, but was also a man of great courage and decisive action.

At the repeated request of the Latvian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Tikhon onApril 14, 1921, blessed Archbishop John to go to Latvia, but on May 23 he changed his decision at the request of the clergy and faithful of

Penza. Only on July 19, 1921, "in view of the importunate request of the Latvian Church," did the Patriarch give his final agreement for Archbishop John to leave, giving him a document of gratitude for his self-denying and fruitful labors for the good of the Church. Before Archbishop John's departure, Patriarch Tikhon, in agreement with the decree of the Holy Synod and the Higher Church Council, granted Archbishop John the widest canonical autonomy in the governance of the Latvian Orthodox Church. This act of confidence was completely justified by the further activity of Archbishop John, who in his martyr's death followed in the steps of the Patriarch.

On July 24, 1921, the Orthodox clergy and people, with crosses and sacred objects from all the Orthodox churches, triumphantly met Archbishop John at the train depot and conducted him to the Cathedral Church. Even while the Archbishop was celebrating his first service here (where an Orthodox hierarch had not celebrated since 1917), the local Orthodox leaders had no idea where he was going to live, since the bishop's residence had just been seized by the government. But at the conclusion of the service, after giving his blessing to the people, Archbishop John, to the astonishment of everyone present, went to the basement of the Cathedral and said: "I will live here." Thus he testified to the persecution of the Latvian Church and made the Cathedral the center of his unrelenting battle to restore the rights of the Orthodox Church in Latvia. In the campaign that followed in the Latvian government and press to demolish the Cathedral, the fact that Archbishop John himself lived there was a decisive factor that prevented the realization of this project.

The arrival of Archbishop John was the beginning of a new era in the life of the Latvian Orthodox Church. His first appeal to the Latvian government was met with the cold reply: "The laws of Latvia know neither the Orthodox Church nor its organs and organizations and do not oblige the Latvian government to defend the Orthodox Church." Soon, however, Archbishop John succeeded in obtaining the promulgation of a law concerning the Orthodox Church in Latvia which regulated the relation between the Church and the State and secured for the Church a number of rights, in particular obtaining from the government considerable sums of money. A stop was put to the senseless destruction of Orthodox holy objects, such as the removal of the chapel from the main train depot in Riga. The Orthodox parishes began to be strengthened and built, and the churches which had been destroyed in the War were restored. From the very beginning Archbishop John was the head of all the Orthodox Christians in Latvia, both Russians and Latvians, and it was thanks only to his unquestioned authority, mind, experience, and subtle tact that there was avoided the terrible division which prevailed in all the other States of the Baltic coast between the Russians and the local inhabitants. This Latvian by birth with a Russian soul was, as it were, a bridge between the two peoples and hoth the one and the other considered him its own.

Beginning in 1925 Archbishop John became the representative of the Russians of Latvia in Parliament. From this moment his activity took on enormous dimensions: he opened an Orthodox seminary, property was restored to churches, and finally, he managed to obtain the return from the Soviet Union of Church holy objects and property for great sums of money. Orthodox Latvians, who before Archbishop John's coming had largely concealed themselves "for fear of the Jews," now stepped out boldly behind their fearless leader, and the Latvian Church experienced the best years of its brief existence. In a few years, according to official statistics, the Orthodox population increased by twenty per cent; thirteen new churches were built and consecrated, and four others were under construction, with still others being planned, when Archbishop John was martyred.

The situation of the Latvian Orthodox Church in the first years after the First World War and the Russian Civil War was, of course, difficult; but incomparably more difficult was the situation of Orthodox believers in Russia. Archbishop John successfully fought against his local enemies, the Latvian Communists, but he also did not forget his chief enemies, the enemies of the whole Russian people, the Bolsheviks.

And so it was that a regular campaign of lies and slanders was started against Archbishop John. The campaign was systematic and well-planned; when one lie was exposed, a new slander would immediately be invented.

Hysterical women were even found who testified in court of their clandestine "meetings" with the Archbishop; but all their lies were exposed. Alas! We Orthodox Christians in Latvia must take the blame for not sufficiently protecting our Vladika. Few were those who fought against the campaign of lies and slander. And yet, few were those families among the Russians in Latvia whom Vladika was not ready to help in one way or another. He was the benefactor also of many non-Orthodox people. He was truly the father of his flock.

In the last years Archbishop John suffered much from the so-called "Russian Christian" Movement. Archbishop John himself loved children and young people very much and was glad to see representatives of the youth, and it was not rare that groups of the youth, and even whole classes of students, would visit him (for in Riga at that time there were more than a dozen Russian Primary Schools and several Gymnasia). At first Archbishop John was very sympathetic to the newly-formed Movement; but with time, when the nature of this organization became clear, he had nothing more to do with it. His reputation among "liberal" religious groups was likewise not helped by his friendly relations with the Synod of Russian Bishops Abroad, even though for political reasons he could not be a part of them. In 1931, on the tenth anniversary of Archbishop John's episcopate in Riga, Metropolitan Anthony, Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, was to call him "a courageous defender of Orthodoxy."

Archbishop John's political enemies did not hesitate even to send hooligans to attack him once when he was returning in the evening to his summer residence outside of town. As usual, he was walking home the several miles from the end of the streetcar line. The hirelings were supposed to beat him mercilessly, but instead, miscalculating the physical strength of their victim, they were mastered by him. To begin with, the Archbishop knocked their heads together until stars appeared before their eyes. But then he took them home, spoke to them from the heart, and had such an effect on them that they repented of everything before him and became his friends.

In the life of Archbishop John there were some circumstances which for a while were enigmatic. His slanderers for a long time reproached him for the fact that he lived alone, without a cell-attendant. "He is afraid of witnesses," they said, repeating the slanders which were spread about him. But when his well-wishers asked him about this, he replied that it was better for him to live alone. Various people came to him and, besides this, he did not want to subject anyone to danger. The meaning of these words became clear only after his martyr's death.

And indeed, people of the most various sorts would come to see the Archbishop. Famous foreign prelates would come, and also poor people and some kind of suspicious-looking ragged creatures. To the end he had some sort of underground ties with Russia, and he received information from there by ways of his own. No matter how hard the Communist regime strove to seal Russia hermetically, still people would evidently be going there and back, and Archbishop John was some kind of a transfer point. But he knew how to keep quiet, and hardly anyone knew the details of this side of his activity.

Another side of Archbishop John's activity was his inspired, ceaseless and completely open battle against the atheist regime in Russia. No matter where he might speak (as a member of Parliament, before Russian organizations, and most of all from the Church ambo), everywhere his powerful and bold voice sounded forth fearlessly, imploringly and loudly, like an alarm bell. He was an inspired preacher; he spoke simply and briefly and did not spare his language when he talked about the Bolsheviks. Many reproached him for this also, as in general for his political activity. Indeed, it is the standard Soviet accusation against the New Martyrs that their confession of truth is an act of "politics." I think that he would have preferred a solitary life in some quiet monastery cell, giving himself over to spiritual labors; but the times would not allow this. Anyone who ever saw the Archbishop in the garden of his summer residence, near the beehives, or working at his carpenter's bench, knew that such occupations were not foreign to him.

A good example of Archbishop John's fearless expression of the truth is to be seen in his sermon in the Riga Cathedral on Great Friday, April 10, 1931. For him it is not possible to separate the Golgotha of Christ our Saviour and the Golgotha of the contemporary Orthodox Church. Standing before the

Holy Shroud of Christ, the hierarch's flock does not "escape reality," but is told how to understand the terrible reality of these days, and how to be victorious in its midst. (Excerpts; full Russian text in *Orthodox Russia,* 1953, no. 5)

"Of Joseph of Arimathea it is said that he was a disciple of Christ, but secretly, "for fear of the Jews." In this respect he is not an example for us. To hide one's faith out of fear is not a work worthy of respect. If you really fear God, you will no longer fear anyone else at all. Stand for Christ and He will stand for you. Lukewarmness must be cast out of oneself and out of others. The fear of men is the weeds on the spiritual field which are to be uprooted.

"Joseph of Arimathea followed Christ from afar, secretly. Oh, if only this would serve as a warning for all those who in our time also hesitate to confess Christ openly. Renounce the evil counsels of the world and the flesh! Forward for truth, righteousness, and the Lord!

"But perhaps someone will say: the time when Joseph lived and acted was different from our time. O my contemporary friends, either you actually do not see, or else in a cowardly manner you pretend not to see that our present reality, both in word and in deed, has far surpassed all that measure of evil deeds which forced Joseph to cease his concealment and come out into the arena of open confession of Christ.

"Anyone who follows the contemporary press and the contemporary oratorical platform knows that the contemporary mockery of Christ has incomparably surpassed both in its malice and in its crudeness all the mockeries which the contemporaries of Christ cast upon Him up to Golgotha and on Golgotha. The person of Christ, and the teaching of Christ, and all the works of Christ, and His whole work in general have been subjected to the crudest and most shameful mockery. If the present-day enemies of Christ could obtain the Body of Christ which was crucified on Golgotha, it would again be subjected to the most refined torments, the most subtle means of torture to death. But the Body is not available to them, and so the enemies of Christ exhaust themselves in tortures and crucifixion of the Body of Christ which is on the earth, and is called the Church of Christ. Recall what you have seen, heard, and read about the torture of the Body of Christ, the Church, within the boundaries of Bolshevism, and even in the incompleteness of our information you will understand that *the demon of Golgotha is a child by comparison with the Soviet demon.*

"Yes, our time is not like the time of Joseph of Arimathea. It is incomparably more evil and cruder than that time. If Joseph found in the evil deed of Golgotha sufficient inspiration to be converted from secret confession to open confession, then our time should be considered as one that calls us to a loud confession joined to a clearly expressed protest against the raising upon Golgotha not only of God, but also of man. At the mouth of the river Thames, at one of the points which juts out and marks a dangerous shallow, there has been placed a bell which by its ringing during storms warns sailors against the mortal danger. The fiercer the storm, the sharper and more powerful its ring. At the present time of storm and darkness, when the shallow of Bolshevism has spread across the whole face of the earth as a deliberate trap, *every soul must take upon itself the role of this bell* which warns and saves. They are deeply mistaken who consider this danger to be local. And even a danger of a purely local character cannot be a matter of indifference for a Christian; but the present Bolshevik danger of which we are speaking has the intensified aim of becoming universal. Therefore the bell of alarm at the present time should be sounded across the whole face of the earth, to warn everyone everywhere.

"No concessions to the enemy! Give him an inch and he will take a mile; give him a finger and he will take the whole arm.

"When we entered the Church of Christ by the gates of Holy Baptism, of us was demanded the confession of faith in God in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Church. But also, three times we were asked: 'Do you renounce satan and all his works and all his angels and all his service and all his pride?' And three times we replied: 'I renounce them.' Again three times we were asked: 'Have you renounced satan?' And we replied three times: 'I have renounced him.' When in later life it comes to confessing the faith, usually this part of the confession is forgotten. At all times this is bad, but at a time of intense battle between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of satan, such a forgetfulness is intolerable.

"For the infirm human consciousness there is born the temptation that supposedly one may confess God and at the same time keep a neutral position, a kind of loyalty with regard also to the kingdom of satan. There is created thus a kind of double citizenship. But upon all of us there lies a double responsibility: on the one hand, to kindle in oneself and in others an active love for the Kingdom of God, and on the other hand to kindle a no less active hatred for the kingdom of the devil.

"The Lord is the same yesterday and today and forever. When the shame of godlessness and impiety now presses upon the children of the new Israel, Holy Russia, somewhere in the plains of Russia, or in the Siberian forests, or in some one of the countries of exile and diaspora of the great God-bearing people, there is already being prepared a grace-given field which will cause to sprout up a chosen one of God for the deliverance and rebirth of the God-bearing people. There are no more leaders, and pastors are in straitened conditions. The human eye does not see from where deliverance might come; but the All-knowing Lord knows this. The Lord, by ways known to Him alone, will raise up suitable men at a suitable time. Of this we can and must be convinced."

As perhaps few other non-Russians, Archbishop John felt deeply Russia's tragedy and saw the significance of Orthodox Russia for the whole world.

The Bolsheviks do not kill people abroad for nothing; this, after all, is a somewhat risky thing to do. Rather, they destroy only those people who are dangerous to them. The murder of Archbishop John was the best evaluation of his activity "on the other side" of the iron curtain. Historical events that followed his murder: the war, the occupation of Latvia, and its forcible annexation to the Soviet Union after a fraudulent election, showed clearly for whom it was necessary and why it was necessary to remove Vladika.

The generally accepted version of the Archbishop's death, which was confirmed for me personally by the brother of the reposed, Anton Pommer, is as follows: The Archbishop had been called in the evening by Sobinov, the famous singer from Russia, who was passing through Riga; he was an old friend of the Archbishop's, such a one as the Bolsheviks once in a while allowed to go abroad. It was agreed that he would come to the Archbishop in the evening. Vladika opened the door to him and — let in his murderers. Sobinov himself died under mysterious circumstances at this very same time.

The story went that firemen, who had been called by neighbors about two o'clock in the morning, found a frightful disorder in the Archbishop's residence: cupboards and drawers had been thrown out, the desk had been rummaged, furniture had been overturned. The Archbishop had evidently been wounded in the hall, on the lower floor, and on the leaf of the door had been carried to the attic, where in the workshop he had been tied to the carpenter's bench and, having been doused with kerosene, had been set afire. An examination of the lungs revealed that he had still been alive at this time, for there was smoke in the lungs. There was evidence that he had been tortured. Both stoves in the hall were burning, and in them some kind of papers had been burned. It is known that he had papers proving the treasonable activity of the Latvian Communists.

This crime was never explained, at least officially. It was probably the only unsolved crime of this sort for the whole period of the existence of independent Latvia. Every child in Latvia knew who were the true inspirers of this crime, but there were no official accusations: the trail led to the Soviet Embassy. The press did not write about this; the shadow which the mighty and cunning neighbor threw upon the small land of two million people was too ominous. But the whole country knew the truth. The crime occurred in the night between Thursday and Friday, October 12, 1934. The Archbishop was in the full flower of his life and activity and was not yet sixty years old, and he was the most outstanding figure in the Church life of the Baltic countries.

I remember that sorrowful day when the news spread in school that the Archbishop was no more. We walked from the streetcar, going those same few miles which the reposed himself had often walked. We stood for the requiem service in the modest wooden church next to the charred house, and looked at the small linen roll which contained all that remained of the mighty Archbishop.

I remember the funeral and burial with some confusion. The whole city was in mourning; more than 100,000 people were in the streets — about one-fourth of the whole population of the city — accompanying the coffin. In the Cathedral, from the bishop's place to the Altar, there were rows of priests, fifty on each side. Everyone followed the coffin. From the Cathedral to the Holy Protection Cemetery, a distance of several miles, a dense crowd lined the way. In this there was a kind of demonstration, a challenge to the unpunished murderers. Soon a small chapel was raised over the grave, a miniature replica of the bell-tower of the Cathedral. In the former residence of the Archbishop in the basement of the Cathedral, a corner was devoted to his memory, with the bench on which he had been burned. A vessel containing a few drops of his blood was walled up in the wall of the Cathedral and an inscription made on a marble plaque. Here every Thursday (the day of the murder) a requiem service was celebrated.

The Cathedral Church of Riga has now been converted into a "planetarium," but the chapel in the cemetery is intact, and requiem services are still sung there by the faithful on the day of the Archbishop's martyrdom, October 12, and on his namesday, June 24.

As long as these holy places are in captivity to the haters of God, it remains for us only to pray that the time of our trials may be cut short, and that the Church, cleansed by the blood of Her martyrs, may again be renewed and may fittingly glorify them.

LIUDMILLA KOEHLER

The author is the sister of the
Archbishop's last Subdeacon.

APPENDIX II

Archbishop Leonty of Chile

CONFESSOR OF HEARTFELT ORTHODOXY

Commemorated June 19 (†1971)

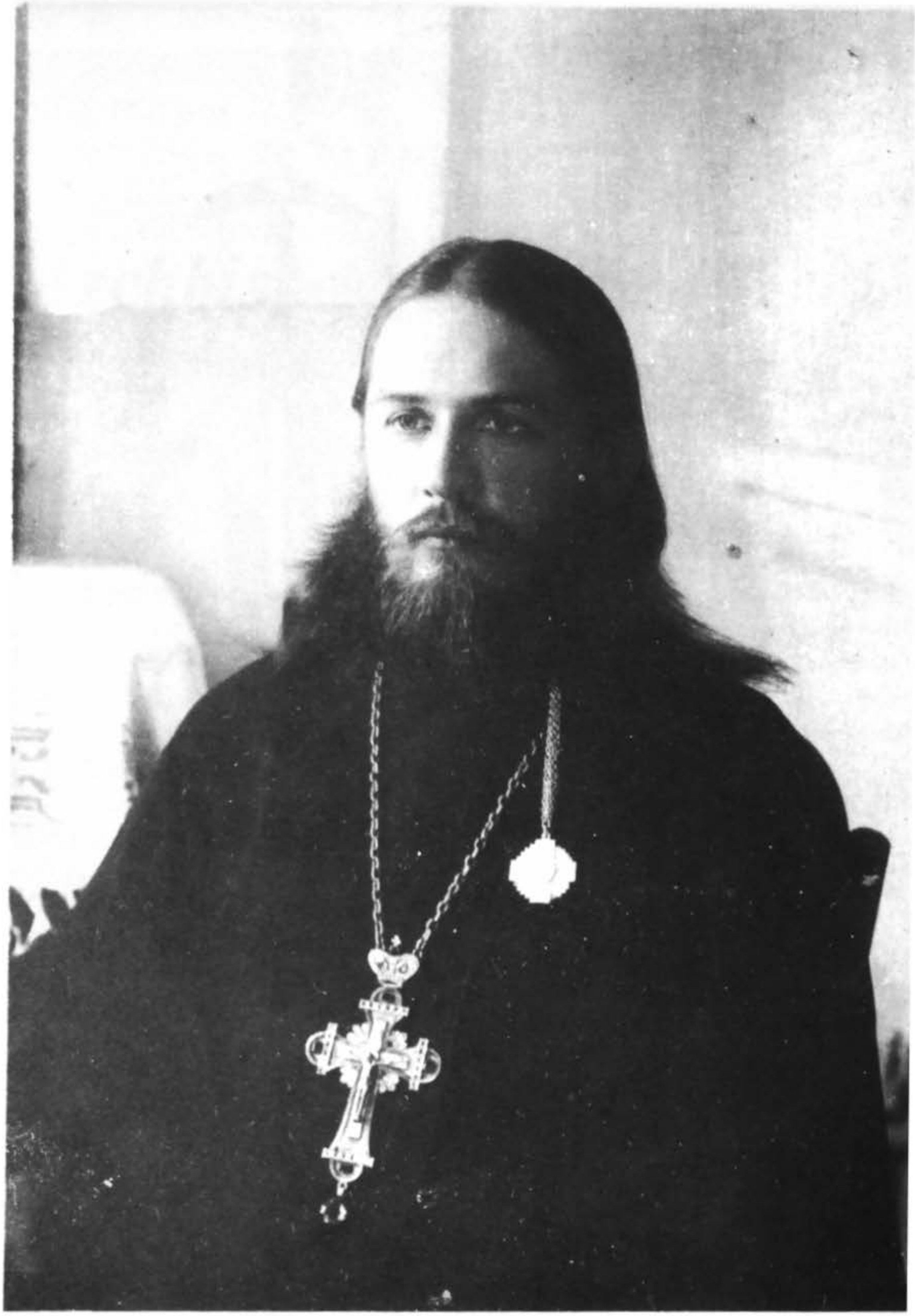
Despite the apparent fading away of the power of Christianity from our civilization and the noticeable absence of Christian heroes in our midst today, God has not abandoned His persecuted Church in this century and has raised up remarkable Orthodox hierarchs whose heroic stature only increases with time into historic proportions. These heroes, unfortunately, largely escape the attention of most people in the Church.

One such hierarch, who died just ten years ago, almost in oblivion, was Archbishop Leonty of Chile, a fearless propagator of Orthodox Christianity at first in Russia and later outside of it. His historic place is that of a true confessor of the *Christianity of the heart.*

When he died on June 19/July 2, 1971—precisely the fifth anniversary of the repose of his beloved Archbishop John Maximovitch, another outstanding hierarch of the 20th century—Archimandrite Constantine of Jordanville stated:

"There are people whose death fills with light the spot which they have in people's hearts. These people in all their contacts lived by their great heart. What does this mean? It means that for them every person with whom they had contact, even if only for a moment, was a personality of a spiritual nature... One can say that although he has left us, he has come close to us, but not in an earthly way."

Archbishop Leonty was born on August 7, 1907, in a pious Russian family (Filipovich). His distant relative was St. Athanasius of Brest, who suffered a martyr's death at the hands of Roman Catholics in the 17th century.



Archimandrite Leonty
Kiev, 1935

ARCHBISHOP LEONTY

From early childhood he revealed strong leanings towards the Church and longed to dedicate his life to it. His early education took place in a private school, where his immense musical talent made him a leading boy-soloist in choir. He remembered with great emotion how Emperor Nicholas II visited his town and he saw the unearthly glance of the future Tsar-martyr.

When the Revolution struck Kiev he was already spiritually close to the Kiev Caves Lavra, and he was arrested; but when it was discovered that he came from a "proletariat" family, he was released, and because of his great tenor voice the Soviet government offered him a free education and training for the opera. Thus a great musical career was open before him, but he turned it down in order to serve the Holy Orthodox Church.

And what a sorrowful path he took upon himself!—a path of perpetual deprivation, suffering, and the witnessing of endless personal tragedies during the Soviet years down to the coming of the Germans in 1941. He became a novice at the Lavra at the very time when it was being ruthlessly liquidated. Its monks were tormented and given over to various deprivations, and many were killed.

Out of his sufferings he became a comforter of banished clergymen; he washed the wounds of the hierarchs who had been released and sought refuge in the Lavra. He saved the life of Bishop Parthenius by pulling him out of a gutter and away from a pack of ravenous dogs, and then bringing him to an old woman who was able to nurse him back to life again.

After the final liquidation of the Kiev Caves Lavra, he went to Moscow, where under terrible conditions he was able to go through the theological course in the Academy; the academy sessions at that time were conducted in the private apartments of the professors. Here again he met many bishops and served as a source of contact between them and other clergymen.

Possessing a document declaring him a genuine member of the "proletariat," he took advantage of this opportunity and travelled to many holy places and monasteries in Russia just prior to their liquidation, or shortly afterwards. Thus, he visited Sarov, Diveyevo, many monasteries in the Novgorod area as well as in other regions. He saw the great Rostov vandalized, its relics desecrated, and the clergy humiliated. All that he saw he recorded in his diaries, a portion of which has been preserved in manuscript form.

He witnessed the death pangs of Holy Russia. He heard the voices of holy hierarchs lamenting, holy fools prophesying, and mothers weeping; but all this did not throw him into despair, but on the contrary filled his heart with holy zeal, for he understood that he lived in a new age of martyrs.

APPENDIX

Because of his close association with very many church figures, he was able to be a living witness to their confessing stand for Christ, which enabled him later in the free world to testify to their innocent sufferings, inflicted with beastly atrocity by the Soviet government. Much of the work of Father Michael Polsky in his three volumes on the New Martyrs of Russia is based on material sent him by Archbishop Leonty.

Archbishop Leonty himself did not escape severe persecution in the years before the outbreak of the Second World War. He was imprisoned three times and after recalled how, when several bishops and priests had been incarcerated with him under the close supervision of the inhuman guards, they had managed to celebrate the Divine Liturgy while pretending to play cards around a table. The prison conditions in the 1930's were so bad that most inmates were prepared to die in the most inhuman conditions. Some performed the Eucharist on the body of a dying sufferer, recognized as a martyr, since the Divine Liturgy is always performed over the relics of martyrs.

Somehow Vladika managed to get out of prison and for some time was forced to hide in an attic, suspended in a sack-like hammock so as not to reveal his presence by footsteps; the only time he could exercise was in the dead of night when the tenants below were asleep. Such living conditions of the persecuted Christians in the USSR seem incredible to us in the free world only because of the lukewarmness of our own Orthodox faith. But if we would live by the Orthodox calendar, where every day there are Scripture readings and the commemoration of saints and martyrs, we would understand.

When the Germans arrived in Western Russia in 1941, freedom of religion was restored and a tremendous field of activity opened for the surviving clergy. At this time Archimandrite Leonty found himself in Belo-Russia, where he was soon consecrated bishop in the renowned Pochaev Lavra, which up to then had been Polish territory and so had escaped destruction at Soviet hands. Between 1941, when he was consecrated, and November of 1943, when he left for the West, he was bishop of Zhitomir and consecrated over 300 priests and several bishops, and opened hundreds of churches. His enthusiasm and deeply-felt attitude towards people made him an outstanding archpastor who, when celebrating the Divine services, was transported into another world. His high tenor voice seemed to soar above earthly tumult, but his keen mind was never detached from human reality. He continued his church activity in the same spirit in Austria and

Western Germany after the war, when he was appointed bishop of Paraguay and Chile in South America (Argentina became part of his diocese just before his death).

In Chile he founded a monastic community, one of whose members was the later Bishop Savva of Edmonton, Canada. Vladika brought him into his monastic brotherhood, inspired him towards the monastic ideal, tonsured him and placed him as an independent pastor who later, as a zealous bishop, started a movement of spiritual renewal in the Russian Church and is now known as the chronicler of the miraculous life of Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch.

During his travels in the free world Archbishop Leonty made a study of the sorrowful state of his Orthodox brethren in Greece, who were languishing under the modernistic influences on Orthodox life, symbolized by the new papal calendar which had been forced upon them in the 1920's. In his martyric zeal he went to Greece and consecrated bishops for the believers who followed the Old Calendar, thus establishing a close contact between them and the Russian Church Abroad.

Soon he was made an archbishop and founded the Dormition Convent from nuns he brought from the Holy Land; this convent now operates an orphanage and a parish school in the name of St. John of Kronstadt. These nuns, headed by the righteous Abbess Alexia, were originally blessed in their ascetic life by the Optina Elder Nektary, now a glorified saint, whose traditions they firmly adhered to in the monastic training of novices.

Archbishop Leonty was a flaming defender of truth and rose fearlessly in all his spiritual stature to put down any manifestation of unrighteousness. From his first acquaintance with Archbishop John Maximovitch in Paris, he immediately recognized in him a living saint, just like the ones he had seen and lived with in much-suffering Russia. With all his loving heart he bowed down before the spiritual authority of Blessed John and supported him whenever he was slandered by those who lacked his experience of living contact with God's genuine saints. When these slanders took a serious form and Archbishop John was put on trial in San Francisco in the 1960's (accused of covering up dishonesty in church finances), Archbishop Leonty immediately flew to defend him and sat with him, together with Bishops Nektary and Savva, on the bench of the accused. Archbishop John, of course, was proven innocent, and the monument of his victory today is the magnificent cathedral, "The Joy of All Who Sorrow", in San Francisco, under which Blessed John's own remains lie.

When Archbishop Leonty learned of the sudden death of Archbishop John, he, together with another righteous and persecuted hierarch, Archbishop Averky of Jordanville, drove all the way across the United States to be at his funeral. There he shed bitter tears over the body of Archbishop John, whom he loved so much that his wish was to be closer to his grave, perhaps as Archbishop of San Francisco. God, however, did not grant this, and exactly on the fifth anniversary of Archbishop John's death, after having prayed for the repose of his soul in his own cathedral in Buenos Aires, he gave his soul over to God, joining his beloved Abba.

The sudden death of Archbishop Leonty, who had been recovering from a heart ailment, was a great sorrow for his flock. They buried him in the cemetery which he himself had established. The sick, dying child of a local Chilean woman was placed on his grave and was miraculously healed. There were other caes of similar heavenly intervention through the prayers of Archbishop Leonty. But the most touching account of him comes from a venerator of his memory, who was granted a series of visions of him, a portion of which we offer here:

"This vision took place exactly on the day of the decision of the Council of Bishops in 1971 concerning the beginning of preparations for the canonization of the New Martyrs of Russia. It was on a Saturday. During a light sleep my spiritual father (who is still alive in Buenos Aires) appeared to me in spirit, confessed me, and released my sins.

"At the beginning of this dream I saw myself in a huge temple not built by human hands. On the right kliros for quite a distance was a huge crowd of people dressed in white; I could not make out their faces. Around me there was a quiet, heart-rending singing, although I couldn't see anyone there. Then both side doors of the altar swung open and from them began to come out holy hierarchs and monks, fully vested in gentle blue vestments; among them I could recognize only St. Nicholas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lycia. From the door near me, among the passing bishops, Vladika Leonty passed by and stopped near me, saying: 'You, brother Basil, were called and you *did* come. You know we have a great celebration here today!' 'What kind of celebration, Vladika?' I asked. And he continued: 'The heavenly glorification of the Tsar-martyr!' And having bowed to me slightly, he continued on his way to the kathedra (in the center of the church).

"Finally, the holy doors of the altar opened, and out of them came the Tsar-martyr, looking just as he appears on his official portraits during the first years of his reign—that is, very young. He was dressed in the Tsar's royal mantle, as during his coronation, and he wore the emperor's crown on his head. In his hands he held a large cross, and on his pale face I noticed a slight wound, either from a bullet or some blow. He passed by me at an even pace, descended the step of the ambo, and went into the center of the church. As he neared the kathedra the singing increased in volume, and when his foot touched the step of the kathedra it became so loud that it seemed that a whole world of people had gathered and were singing with one breath.

"Here I came to my senses on my bed, immensely shaken, with a little wound on my right eye. It was about four o'clock in the morning. For a long time I was under the deep impression of what I had experienced."

The same man saw Archbishop Leonty in a dream just before the fortieth day after his repose: "On the 37th day after the repose of Archbishop Leonty I had a vision in a dream. I saw him in church vestments and a mitre heading a solemn pontifical church service. When he saw me he quickly got up and hastened to greet me. He embraced and kissed me and said, 'How happy I am to see you, brother Basil. I am now quite well. I feel no pain, and here I am very happy. In a few days I will receive new quarters with all comforts, as they say on earth; it has already been promised me.'

"A month after this I saw another dream, which indicated to me that he had been granted a heavenly abode. I heard beautiful music and saw millions of sparkling stars, and I was already on a boat which was to bring me to the other shore where he was. This is what God prepared for his faithful servant of the catacomb hierarchy, and later of our Church Outside of Russia." (*Orthodox Life*, 1971, December, pp. 18-20.)

Through the prayers of the righteous Archbishop Leonty, confessor of the Orthodoxy of the heart, may our Lord have mercy on all of us. Amen.

F. H.

Holy New Martyrs of Russia
Pray to God for us

Alphabetical list of the New Martyrs mentioned in this book.

Archbishop Abercius of Zhitomir
May 15 (†1927)
Eldress Agatha of Belo-Russia
Feb. 5 (†1939)
Metropolitan Agathangel of Yaroslav
Oct. 3 (†1928)
Priest Alexander Medvedsky
Feb. 18 (†1932)
Archpriest Alexander Phillippenko
Priest Alexander
June 8
Alexander Jacobson
Sept. 8 (†1930)
C.A. Alexeev
Alexei Ikonnikoff
July 20 (†1928)
Bishop Alexis Bui of Voronezh
Feb. 12 (†1936)
Metropolitan Alexis of Vilna
Bishop Amphilochius (Skvortsov) of Enisei
(†1946)
Fool for Christ's Sake Anastasia Andreyevna
March 1
Archbishop Anatole of Irkutsk
January 24 (†1921)
Elder Anatole of Optina
July 30 (†1922)

Metropolitan Anatole (Grisuik) of Odessa
Feb. 10 (†1938)
Bishop Andrew (Uktomsky) of Ufa
Dec. 26 (†1937)
Bishop Anthony (Romanovsky)
June 12 (†1937?)
Abbess Antonina
March 1 (†1929)
Bishop Arcadius
Jan. 26 (†1938)
Archimandrite Arsenius
Sept. 23 (†1937)
Metropolitan Arsenius (Stradnitsky) of Novgorod
April (†1936)
Archbishop Athanasius of Kiev
Archbishop Barlaam (Riashentsev)
June 8 (†1942)
Barnabas, Cell-attendant of Elder Anatole
Nov. 12 (†1938)
Bishop Barsanuphius (Luzhin)
June 12
Hieromonk Benjamin (Essen)
Feb. 18 (†1938)
Metropolitan Benjamin of Petrograd
Aug. 14 (†1922)
New Martyr Boris
Aug. 16 (†1937)
Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan
Jan. 26 (†1937?)
Cyril Ataev
July 20 (†1928)
Bishop Damascene (Tsedrik) of Glukhov
Dec. 4 (†1935)
Archbishop Dimitry (Lyubimov) of Gdov
Aug. 6 (†1938)
Archimandrite Dimitry

Priest Dimitry Ivanov
March 22 (†1934)
Elder Dositheus of Optina
November 6
Priest Elias and Matushka Eugenia Chetverukhin
Feb. 16 (†1934)
Schema-Hieromonk Eugene
Feb. 5 (†1939)
Gregory the Cross-Bearer
Nov. 6 (†1936)
Bishop Gurias
(†1937)
Bishop Herman (Riashentsev)
June 8 (†1937)
Bishop Hierotheus (Afonik) of Nikolsk
May 31 (†1928)
Archbishop Ilarion (Troitsky)
Dec. 15 (†1929)
Bishop Ilarion (Belsky)
(†1937)
Bishop Irinarch of Great Ustiug
Priest Ismael Rozhdestvensky
June 17
Archbishop John (Pommer) of Latvia
Oct. 12 (†1934)
Archpriest John Andreevsky
Archpriest John Steblin-Kamensky
(†1930)
Bishop Joseph (Orekhov)
June 12
Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd
Dec. 15 (†1938)
New Martyr Lydia
July 20 (†1928)
Schema-Bishop Macarius
April 1 (†1944)

Matushka Maria of Gatchina
Jan. 26 (†1930)
Bishop Maxim (Zhizhilenko) of Serpukhov
June 23 (†1931)
Hieromonk Methodius
March 1 (†1920)
Fool for Christ's Sake Michael (Misha)
April 1 (†c. 1931)
Fool for Christ's Sake Michael the Blessed of Chernigov
May 15 (†1922)
Archpriest Mitrofan
Feb. 12 (†1931)
Bishop Nektary (Trezvinsky) of Yaransk
July 23
Elder Nektary of Optina
April 29 (†1928)
Hieromonk Nektary (Ivanov)
Father Nicander
Archpriest Niholas Piskanovsky
(†1932)
Priest Nicholas Tsedrik
Dec. 4 (†1917)
Priest Nicholas Kedrov
May 15 (†1936?)
Priest Nicholas Prozorov
August 6 (†1930)
Priest Nicholas Zagorovsky
Sept. 30 (†1943)
Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II
July 4 (†1918)
Hieromonk Nikon of Optina
November 6
Bishop Onouphry
June 12 (†1938)
Archbishop Pachomius of Chernigov
May 15 (†1938)

Archimandrite Panteleimon of Optina
Nov. 6 (†1918)
New Martyr Paramon
Feb. 5 (†1941)
Bishop Partheny (Brianskikh)
June 19 (†1937)
Bishop Paul (Kratirov) of Yalta
(†1933-5)
Archbishop Peter (Zverev)
Jan. 27 (†1929)
Metropolitan Peter of Krutitska
Aug. 29 (†1936)
Priest Peter Lagov
Feb. 16 (†c. 1931)
Archbishop Platon of Revel
Jan. 14 (†1919)
Bishop Platon (Ridnev) of Bogorodsk
(†1933)
Archbishop Seraphim (Zvezdinsky) of Dimitriov
Archbishop Seraphim (Samoilovich) of Uglich
Dec. 12 (†c. 1935)
Schema-Hieromonk Seraphim
May 31 (†1923)
Bishop Sergius (Druzhinin) of Narva
Priest Sergius Shukin
Abbess Sophia of Kiev
March 22 (†1941)
Bishop Stephen
April 13 (†1933)
Archimandrite Symeon of Eleazar
Archbishop Theodore (Pozdeyev)
March 21 (†1938)
Archpriest Theodore (Prof. K. Andreev)
April (†1929)
Archimandrite Theodosius of the Kiev Caves Lavra

Fool for Christ's Sake Theoktista Michaelovna
Feb. 22 (†1936)
Patriarch Tikhon
March 25 (†1925)
Young Student Valentina
Dec. 26 (†1937)
Priest Valentine Sventitsky
Jan. 26 (†1936)
Bishop Victor of Glazov
July 19 (†1934)
Archpriest Victorin Dobronravov
Monk Vincent of Optina
Nov. 12
Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev
Jan. 25 (†1918)
Young Priest Vladimir
Aug. 16 (†1937)
Priest Vladimir Zagarsky
May 15 (†1937)

From the Church Service to the New Martyrs of Russia

TROPARION, Tone 4

O ye blossoms of the spiritual meadow of Russia, who have wondrously flowered in the years of fierce persecutions,* numberless new martyrs and confessors:* royal passion-bearers, hierarchs, and pastors,* monastics and laymen, men, women and children,* who in patience have brought forth good fruit unto Christ.* Entreat Him as the One who planted you* to deliver His people from godless and evil people,* and that the Church of Russia be made firm* by your blood and sufferings,* unto the salvation of our souls.*

Sources

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE CATACOMB CHURCH

Very little has as yet appeared in English regarding the reliable sources of information on the Catacomb Church. In academic circles, only one book has even attempted to approach this subject (William C. Fletcher, *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground*, Oxford University Press, London, 1971), and it is marred by an over-reliance on Soviet government sources which are far from the "objectivity" they claim.

In the case of the Catacomb Church, "objectivity" itself (even if this mythical ideal could be attained) is not enough. The Catacomb Church is a living organism, and one that is persecuted and seldom appears on the surface of "objective" life. An accurate picture of it can presented only by actual participants in its life, and comments on it in the Soviet press and the scholarly world (which are often grossly distorted, whether intentionally for propaganda purposes, or simply out of ignorance) must be evaluated by the picture which is presented by actual eye-witnesses and participants.

The primary sources for Catacomb Church life fall into three main categories:

(1) The official statements and unofficial letters of the Catacomb hierarchs and priests who separated from Metropolitan Sergius in 1927 and the few years following.

(2) Personal accounts of believers who belonged to the Catacomb Church in the period before the Second World War and then came to the West.

(3) Letters and accounts of Catacomb Church life which began to appear in the 1970's, describing the state of the Catacomb Church after the Second World War. Soviet news accounts from this period, describing the uncovering of illegal cells of Catacomb believers, are also a kind of primary source, if one makes allowances for their obvious exaggerations.

Almost all of these sources are in the Russian language. The chief collection of them up to now has been the book of Protopresbyter Michael Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs* (two volumes, Jordanville, 1948 and 1957), and now also Lev Regelson's *Tragedy of the Russian Church* (Paris, 1977), which concentrates mainly on official documents. But there are many other sources, both in manuscript and little accessible printed accounts.

The following is a list of the sources used in compiling the present book. With most of the authors the compilers have had personal contact (indicated by *), and some of the material has been solicited directly from them. Where a pronounced "Sergianist" or "anti-Sergianist" bias is present, this is indicated in the descriptive accounts of the sources below, for the sake of a balanced view of these sources. That all these authors are telling the truth as best they know and remember it, the compilers have no doubt whatever.

ANASTASSY, Archimandrite Z.* (1915-) A relative of Sts. Archbishops Pachomius and Avercius, and a member of a family of New Martyrs. He experienced Church life in the Soviet Union before World War II, after which he became the cell-attandant of Archbishop Ioasaph of Canada (see pp. 180-204) who died in his arms. Retired and residing today in California.

ANDREW, Archbishop* of Novo-Diveyevo Convent (†1979), Father Adrian Rymarenko before monasticism. A disciple of the Optina elders Anatole and Nektary and an avid propagator of the spirit of Optina, being himself a lay priest. He suffered greatly for his faith, was imprisoned, mocked and for years secretly liturgized daily hidden in a closet where he practiced the Jesus prayer and conducted pastoral counseling. He gave shelter to the Optina Monk-martyr Vincent (pp. 309-11) and others. Together with his wife Eugenia Gregorievna he left priceless memoirs on the renowned institution of Optina startsi or eldership. After escaping from the Soviet Union, he devoted the rest of his life to the "restoration of the Orthodox way of life" (the title of his book). He founded the Novo-Diveyevo Convent in New York state and ended his life as an Archbishop.

SOURCES

ANDREYEV, Gennady (Khomiakov).* A contemporary writer of short stories. He was a former inmate of Solovki concentration camp and other atrocious Gulag institutions which he describes in his book *Difficult Roads* (Munich, 1959).

ANDREYEV, Ivan M.* (see pp. 15-103).

*ANFISA, Nun** (†1974) Cell-attendant of Abbess Juliana of Calistoga, California. She witnessed the martyrdom of Bishop Theophan of Solikam (†1919) and many others, primarily in the Novgorod region. Bishop Theophan was dragged by an enraged revolutionary mob which, giggling and laughing satanically, tied him to a pole next to the frozen Kama River. A hole was chiseled out through the ice and Bishop Theophanes was slowly immersed into the icy water and held underwater for several minutes. He was then removed and a thin layer of ice formed around him. This was repeated several times and in this way he met his martyr's death. The horrified Orthodox Christians stood helpless before the frenzied mob which had been instigated by Lenin's ideas. (This account also appears in a short version of the life of Abbess Rufina of Harbin.)

ARENSBURGER, Mr. and Mrs.* Professors in Monterey, California. They have provided testimonies of persecution in the Estonian region. They wrote a brief account of New Martyr Nikifor-Volgin, a talented young writer who, having met a wandering pilgrim of the Catacomb Church, was so inspired by his endless descriptions of the mystic experiences of the Catacomb Church, that he dedicated his whole life to the literary presentation of that phenomenon for which he was arrested in 1940, banished, and finally joined the choir of the New Martyrs. His two major books, *A Pilgrim's Staff* and *The Namesday of a Homeland,* are today two of the most popular texts in Orthodox Samizdat publications, which rekindle in the hearts of persecuted Christians an eternal longing for the heavenly homeland.

ARIADNA, Abbess* of Our Lady of Vladimir Convent in San Francisco. Successor of the holy Abbess Rufina of Harbin (†1925). Originally from Harbin, Manchuria, and Shanghai, both she and Abbess Rufina have given abundant testimonies of the New Martyrs.

ASSUR, Ivan.* The son of New Martyr Vladimir Assur who was an Orthodox educator and author of one of the first books on Orthodoxy in the German language (Berlin, 1928). when he was arrested he took with him only the Gospels and went to die as a martyr.

BARBARA, (Tsvetkova), Abbess* of the Gethsemane Convent in Jerusalem. Before her expulsion from Soviet Russia in the '20's together with a group of theologizing intellectuals such as Berdyaev, she knew many Church figures, elders and righteous men who prophesied concerning the future of Orthodox Russia and died during the persecution.

BARBARA, Nun* of Lesna Convent (†1972). She contributed abundant information on the New Martyrs of Russia by recording in the church press various testimonies describing the horror of life under the Soviet regime. From her pen come the accounts of New Martyr Bishop Andrew of Ufa (pp. 321-8) and the suffering of the New Martyrs of Raithu Monastery.

CONSTANTINE, (Zaitsev), Archimandrite* of Jordanville (†1975). Renowned Church thinker and writer. Of Jewish descent, he was editor for P. B. Struve in Paris and then in Shanghai under Archbishop John (Maximovitch) who baptized him into the Orthodox faith. For the last 25 years of his life he oversaw all the Jordanville publications which, until his repose, surpassed all other periodicals in dealing with the New Martyrs. The artificial silencing by liberal theologians of his profound contribution to the spreading of Orthodoxy in the Free World has greatly hindered the dissemination of the glory of the New Martyrs.

CONUS, Sergei.* A pious layman of Boston, Mass., close to Church and monastic circles. He was in contact with righteous men and women in the Crimea and in New Athos, and collected a lot of information on the New Martyrs (see p. 440ff.).

DEPUTATOV, Archpriest Nicholas.* Received a theological degree from the theological school in Harbin and wrote his thesis on Bishop Theophan the Recluse. From his youth he developed a hobby of collecting old spiritual hooks which led him on a quest for sobriety and correctness of spiritual life which in turn shaped his taste and feeling for truly spiritual people. He dedicated the rest of his life to recording God's manifestation in people whom he knew personally and through others. Among other information, he has given a description of the righteous confessor Bishop Anatole. a saint of America. Now living in Australia, he continues to write for church journals. Author of *Awareness of God*, St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1975.

ERASTOVA, Novice Maria.* A recent convert to Orthodoxy in the Soviet Union. Her life was changed through contact with contemporary confessors such as Matushka Eugenia Chetverukhin (pp. 404-16) and Elder Tavrion (pp. 512-4; see also his life in *Orthodox Word*, No. 96, Jan.-Feb. 1981).

FLETCHER, William C., author of *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground.* This work is significant in Orthodox literature because it demonstrates to the academic world the existence of the Catacomb Church and the validity of the New Martyrs. There are, however, serious flaws in his approach and "objectivity" to the subject matter. Fletcher is simply not well grounded in Orthodoxy or Church history, and he occassionally makes quite elementary errors of fact. For example, he fancies the traditional Orthodox calendar (which dates the years from the Creation of the world) to be a new sectarian invention (see p. 244 of his hook). Also, he borrows heavily from Soviet sources, and their deliberate distortions cause the hook to be one-sided and unbalanced. Thus the author misunderstands the opposition to Metropolitan Sergius' Declaration of 1927, blindly following Soviet sources in attributing political motives to the "schism." Furthermore, he unfairly divides various local manifestations of the opposition into disjointed and isolated groups. It is to his credit, however, that he quotes emigre sources, yet here also he lacks discernment and his sympathies lie with the "scientific" Soviet sources. Orthodoxy in the USSR today simply cannot be understood by a rationalistic scholar who is foreign to the spirit of Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, this book is still of considerable value for its sources and an informed Orthodox person can do much to correct the one-sidedness of its presentation. Used with knowledge, the Soviet sources themselves clearly testify to the continued existence of the Catacomb Church and the martyric courage of her members.

GABRIELA, Nun* of Novo-Diveyevo Convent. A spiritual daughter of Bishop Andrew of Ufa while he was in Kazan. She witnessed the destruction of the Zylontov Monastery in Kazan and a women's monastic community founded by Bishop Andrew for the local Tatar girls (see pp. 321-8).

GERASIM, (Schmaltz), Archimandrite* of Alaska (†1969) A Russian monk in the Optina tradition, he had close contact with many clergy who later became victims of communism. He came to Alaska in 1916 as a missionary and for the rest of his life suffered greatly at the knowledge of what went on in his beloved homeland. Through correspondence with his sister (later Nun Platonida) he received information about the destruction of various monasteries in Russia. Thus we have a description of the New Martyrs of his St. Tikhon of Kaluga Monastery. His staunch defense of the persecuted traditional Orthodox Church consciousness in America inspired the growth of true Orthodoxy in this country and promoted the canonization of St. Herman of Alaska.

GROTOFF, Prof. Sergius* of the University of Rome. Also known under the pen-names of Nestorov and Alexei Rostov; co-editor of Nuestro Pais (Nasha Strana) and the Vladimirsky Calendar. As a religious young man he went through the usual trials of arrests, banishment and concentration camps for his opposition to Sergianism. There he met many Church leaders (see pp. 88-103, 140-50, 151-61). He was a close friend of I.M. Andreyev with whom he collaborated on many projects. After coming out of the Soviet Union he wrote prolifically about the trial of believers under the communist yoke.

GURIAS, Hieromonk* of Jordanville. Orphaned as a child in the Soviet Union, he is today a spiritual father of the brotherhood at Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville. He grew up in a pious family which was persecuted for its faith. The intensity of the grimness of daily soviet life of a believer under communism was too much for the young man and one day he vowed to God not to eat until God personally delivered him from his consuming despondency. He suffered hunger for several weeks when suddenly he was rescued by the coming of the German Army. In thanks for this miraculous deliverance, he made a vow to God to become a monk. He supplied material for Father Michael Polsky's book.

IRTEL, Sergius (Schema-Bishop Theodore)* While a novice in the Valaam and Pskov-Caves Monasteries, he acquired a living experience of persecuted Christianity. He kept contact with persecuted monks and laymen and preserved many memories of these people.

SOURCES

IVANOV, Gali.* A spiritual daughter of Bishop Arcadius; now living in Athens, Greece. Father Arcady urged Gali and her family to leave Russia prophesying in the early '20's the frightful outcome of the satanic nature of militant communism. She preserved Bishop Arcadius' portrait and his beautiful poetry dealing with enduring suffering and spreading goodwill to suffering mankind out of love for Christ. (See pp. 312-20.)

JULIANA, Abbess (Barbara in Schema),* formerly of Calistoga, Ca. (†1971) During the terrible persecution in the 1920's she became a spiritual daughter of Archbishop Theodore of Danielov Monastery and took an active part in helping persecuted clergy. She was a leading member of the Myrrhbearing Sisterhood of the Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. Her direct duties were to supply exiled and arrested bishops with food and packages of clothing. She worked directly under the supervision of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, who received funds from an American relief organization to help hungry and abandoned clergy. These women formed a network throughout the Soviet Union and were able to keep the leading bishops informed of the whereabouts of other leading hierarchs. In the 1930's she was sentenced to execution, but at the last minute this sentence was commuted to 5 years' hard labor. She never forgot this near-death experience. In the Solovki concentration camp she managed to be in contact with and secretly help many bishops, preserving for us a complete picture of the inhuman trials that these descendants of the apostles had to endure. After the Second World War she came to the United States but could not find peace; her heart remained with the persecuted Orthodox people in Russia. She severely criticized the tone of Fr. Michael Polsky's first two volumes because her own experience with Sergian clergy in Russia had been favorable. She supplied material for a few moving accounts of the New Martyrs which were published in the 1950's in a Berkeley periodical, "Following in the Steps of Christ," by Fr. Nicholas Vieglas.

KIETER, Natalia Georgievna, Von* Of German descent and originally indifferent to the Church, Natalia underwent a conversion experience through the prayers of New Martyr Bishop Stephen. She became a spiritual daughter of the wandering Schema-Bishop and New Martyr Peter (Zverev) who matured under the spiritual light of St. John of Kronstadt. Keeping in contact with persecuted clergymen, she became an ardent laborer for Christ, helping wherever she could. Under her influence her mother was tonsured a nun and died a holy death. She took part in church brotherhoods and dedicated her whole life to serving faithful Orthodox clergy, being a fierce opponent to Renovationism. She left many accounts of New Martyrs, among them Bishop Stephen, Bishop Peter, Hieromonk Barnabas (pp. 298-303), and Schema-Bishop Macarius (pp. 358-69). She died in Germany in July, 1981, and willed all her papers to the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood.

KOEHLER, Ludmilla.* Sister to the cell-attendant and subdeacon of New Martyr Archbishop John of Latvia (pp. 578-95). She is a living witness to the martyrdom of many Orthodox Christians in the Baltic States. Her recent visits to the Soviet Union indicate that belief in God in Russia is stronger than ever, and it is only the lukewarmness of Orthodox people in the West that prevents them from seeing the power of the New Martyrs.

KONTZEVITCH, Helene* Church writer. She was the niece of the Church writer Sergei Nilus, who discovered the Conversation of St. Seraphim with N.A. Motovilov, and she has preserved throughout her whole life his zeal for Orthodox literature. She was in contact with the Optina Elders and the authentic Optina tradition, and later became an ardent collaborator in the work of her husband (I.M. Kontzevitch). In her youth she wanted to join the convent of Schema-Abbess Sophia of Kiev, about whom she has recently published a book (see pp. 293-311). To this day, in deep old age, she continues her literary activity, recording information about New Martyrs such as Hieromartyr Metrophanes, Bishop Hierotheus (see pp. 130-9) and others.

KONTZEVITCH, Prof. I.M.* (†1965) A disciple of the Optina elders and one of the most important Church writers of the twentieth century who has helped to transmit the genuine Orthodox understanding of sanctity. He wrote the monumental work *Optina Monastery and Its Era*, which reveals the spiritual atmosphere which nourished the New Martyrs of Russia. This work was intended to be the third part of a trilogy: the first part is the *Acquisition of the Holy Spirit in Ancient Russia*; the second was to be a work on the disciples of Elder Paisius Velichkovsky. Especially important is his "Definition of Eldership" (see *The Orthodox Word*, No. 95, Nov.-Dec. 1980), in which he theologically defines Orthodox eldership, which is so rare today. (See Father Nicholas Zagerovsky, pp. 370-82 and Elder Nektary of Optina, pp. 309-10).

KOVALENKO, Alexandra* She was the daughter of Priest-martyr Gabriel (Polsky Vol. II) and the author of the account of Bishop Vassily, Vicar of Poltava (Polsky Vol. II), an outstanding Josephite hierarch whose abundant epistles against the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius have survived. Bishop Vassily was highly revered by Archbishop Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo.

KRAVCHINA, Father Gregory* A distant relative of Archbishop Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo, now serving a parish in Monterey, California. In Pochaev Lavra, Poland, and during the war years in Germany, he witnessed many miraculous events in the lives of persecuted Christians. One farmer, under the influence of communist propaganda, refused to go to church and to abstain from working on St. Elias' day, saying to himself, "If God exists, let the thunder of St. Elias' chariot prove it to me." Hardly had he finished loading hay onto his cart when, as he was crossing some railroad tracks, an unexpected train thundered over him, severing his head which rolled like a ball away from the tracks. Father Gregory also has a vivid recollection of the Pochaev Lavra when its abbot was Archimandrite Vitaly, later Archbishop of Jordanville (†1960).

LEONID, * *Abbot (Gess)* of Lethbridge, Canada (†1981) A monk of Kiev in the Holy Trinity Monastery founded by the righteous Elder Jonah. Father Leonid left several letters describing the martyrdom and atrocities committed against the monks of his monastery. Some of them were thrown from a bridge into the Dniepr River while being shot as they fell. Others were undressed and mocked by fanatic communist soldiers. At the same time God worked great miracles in the Kiev region. In front of thousands of people, including unbelievers and Jews, church domes miraculously became gold, frescoes shone with miraculously renewed colors, beams of light played in the domes, invisible choirs were heard singing. In one case, a well supernaturally reflected the future of those who looked into it (see p. 348).

LEONTY, * *Archbishop* of Santiago (see pp. 502-9)

LEVITIN-KRASNOV, * *Anatoly* A deacon of the Living Church in the 1930's, now Orthodox but of liberal views, exiled from the Soviet Union in the 1970's. Author of the following books, in which he testified of the astounding reality of the New Martyrs: *Likhie Godi,* Paris, 1977; *Ruk Tvoyikh Zhar,* Israel, 1980.

LOPESHANSKAYA, * *Elena Nikolaevna (Lope)* (†1972) The secretary of Bishop Damascene to whose memory she devoted her whole life. She was an outstanding Church writer known primarily for her works: *Bishop Confessors* (see pp. 234-53 on Metropolitan Cyril, pp. 180-204 on Archbishop Pachomius, and pp. 210-33 on Bishop Damascene); *Russian Myrrhbearers,* published in "Orthodox Russia," 1949; and *The Last Kievan Bishops,* manuscript. Having received an excellent education in Russia, she dedicated her life to a literary career. She considered it her solemn duty to preserve for posterity and young people in the free world the correct ecclesiological understanding of church matters the way the great fathers of the latter times, such as Bishop Damascene, understood them. She published her outstanding accounts about the persecuted Russian Church whenever she could, but unfortunately, to her great consternation, due to the political bickering of church journals her voice was largely drowned out. She placed her hope in Archbishop Leonty. Her priceless first-hand accounts of the persecuted Russian Church breathe the spirit of the ancient catacombs and deserve to be published in English. She was terribly grieved when people dealt with the situation of the persecuted Russian Church in a categorical and legalistic way.

LYOVIN, * *Valentina Valerianovna* Formerly a professor at the University of Hawaii. She was the daughter of Priest-Martyr Valerian, who was in contact with St. John of Kronstadt. Now residing in Sacramento, California.

MAKOWSKAYA, * *Olympiada Anatolievna* (†1976) A spiritual daughter of Schema-Bishop Anthony of Kiev and a friend of many New Martyrs and church figures in the Soviet Union. She was a poetess who kept alive the ideals of Holy Russia and shared her experiences, especially concerning the Kievan region. She encouraged many converts to Orthodoxy and was a close friend of Elena Lopeshanskaya.

MAKUSHINSKY, Subdeacon Alexis* (†1977) and *Zinaida* Spiritual children of Priest-Brothers Ismael and Michael Rozhdestvensky (see pp. 340-7). In his childhood Subdeacon Alexis was in the choir of St. Andrew's cathedral in Kronstadt and one of St. John of Kronstadt's acolytes. They were staunch members of the catacomb Josephite church, and until the coming of the Germans were in constant contact with the catacomb clergy, helping them to preserve total secrecy.

MARIA, Nun (Stakhovich)* Secretly tonsured by the last elder of Valaam, Schemahieromonk Michael (†1963). She is a living witness of the fierce persecution which Valaam monks endured for their staunch adherence to the Old Calendar and refusal to accept or bow down to the spirit of Renovationism, which they regarded as almost equal to the godless yoke in Russia. Nun Maria's close relative, Abbot Rafael, a Valaam monk, together with a group of other monks was walled up alive in a Voronezh GPU prison.

MASICH, Father Nicholas* (†1973) As a young man he suffered persecution and harrassment for his faith. He was imprisoned in the Sarov, Sanaxar, and Temnikoff concentration camp chain. He was forced to log and uproot the very forest in which St. Seraphim of Sarov labored. He knew many righteous men and women, all of whom ended their lives as New Martyrs. He left an account of the righteous Joseph the Silent of Kuban (*Blagovestnik*, No. 12, 1968) and Gregory the Cross-Bearer (see pp. 445-7).

MASHIN, Irene* Former spiritual daughter of Bishop Arcadius (pp. 312-20) and New Martyr Bishop Avercius of Zhitomir (pp. 180-204). She now lives in the Novo-Diveyevo Convent in New York. Her reminiscences of the life of secret catacomb brotherhoods are a very rare contribution to the whole field of literature concerning the New Martyrs. Her son is also still alive and would not have survived were it not for the unanimity and love of the members of the Catacomb Church, who preserved him secretly.

MICHAILA, Nun (Kudinova)* The last surviving monastic tonsured in the Optina Monastery in 1918. As a sixteen year old girl during World War I, she joined the women's corps as a soldier to defend Holy Russia. She lost her left arm and was nursed back to life in a hospital by members of the Royal Family. When the Revolution broke out she managod to join her brother, Father Innocent, in Optina Monastery, where the elders with the consent of the Abbess of the Shamardino Convent tonsured her into monasticism, giving her the name of the Chief of the Heavenly Host for her manful labors as a soldier. Before leaving Russia she saw the lay elder George of Chevriak who was martyred soon afterwards in 1919. With the retreat of the White Army she was evacuated westward and eventually settled in Brazil where she led a monastic life together with her brother, Father Innocent.

She now lives in the New Shamardino Convent in Australia and preserves in her heart a great love and veneration for the New Martyrs, with many of whom she was in personal contact.

MITROFAN, Archimandrite* of San Francisco The son of a priest-martyr, he lived in the Voronezh region where he was in spiritual contact with the righteous Theoktista Michailovna and other ascetics. He married a daughter of the holy Priest-Martyr Mitrofan, who was a favorite spiritual child of Elder Nektary of Optina. As a faithful servant of Christ he endured severe persecution at the hands of the godless. He was greatly consoled and strengthened, however, by his contact with genuine men of God. It was this same quality of genuineness which he later recognized in Archbishop John Maximovitch, then ruling Bishop of Paris and Western Europe, and inspired him to dedicate the rest of his life to serving this blessed Archpastor. Fr. Mitrofan is the author of a complete life of Priest-Martyr Mitrofan of Voronezh (see p. 174) as well as the account of Blessed Theoktista, Fool for Christ's Sake (see p. 173-9).

MOSTIKO, Nicholas and Maria* They were in contact with Bishop Onouphry (pp. 383-403) and other righteous slaves of God in the Soviet Union. After leaving the USSR they were employed by the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. where they live today. Mr. Mostiko is a subdeacon and, together with his wife, preserves a living veneration for the New Martyrs.

NABOK-Vasilkova (†1963) A flaming defender of Church consciousness in the Soviet Union. He was in contact with many New Martyrs and provided much information for Fr. Michael Polsky. He also left a manuscript entitled "Professor Platonov." He died in Germany. See "Father Gennady" (*Orthodox Russia*, no. 4, 1971, in Russian).

NEKTARY, Archimandrite* A former member of the Catacomb Church, he became a monk in Jordanville where he personally typeset and edited both volumes of Fr. Michael Polsky's *Russia's New Martyrs*. He enriched it with much material from his own experience, having himself endured a living martyrdom for his faith. His spiritual father, New Martyr Abbot Barsanuphius, was a founder of the Catacomb Church in southern Russia who endured fierce beatings in the Sarov concentration camp which crippled and disfigured him for life. Here St. Seraphim visited him from the other world and granted him such consolation that for the rest of his life he felt an unearthly happiness and was filled with flaming love for his enemies.

NEKTARY, Bishop* of Seattle (Kontzevitch) The brother of I.M. Kontzevitch. From his childhood he was a spiritual son of Optina Elder Nektary, who prophesied that he would "be of service to us," at the same time asking his mother to preserve him for such a vocation. During the time of fierce persecution of Christians, he was entrusted to the spiritual care of another Optina disciple, Archbishop

Andrew of Novo-Diveyevo under whose guidance he matured into a pastor in Christ's vineyard. His mother (Nectaria in monasticism) was in constant contact with the Optina Elders and helped many others to come in contact with them. She witnessed the destruction of Optina Monastery and many other horrors of the Soviet system. Both she and Bishop Nektary have provided detailed first-hand accounts of their experiences with a whole series of New Martyrs (see pp. 387-9), especially in the Kharkov region. Bishop Nektary is today Vicar-Bishop of the Western Diocese of the United States.

*NESTOROV** (see Grotoff)

NICANDER, Archimandrite* (†1979) A Valaam elder who died as spiritual father of the Lesna Convent in France. He gave invaluable information about the Martyrs of Valaam Monastery who were caught in the Petersburg and Moscow metochia of Valaam. He propagated the Valaam spirit until his last breath, transmitting it to his spiritual daughters in France.

NIKON, Archbishop* of Washington and Florida (†1979) The author of the voluminous biography of Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky, in which he provides a true and very detailed account of the way in which the godless authority took hold of Holy Russia. This book mentions hundreds of Church figures and gives abundant data on New Martyrs. Archbishop Nikon was an inspirer of the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood and a propagator of the preservation of the ideals of Holy Russia. He provided information on Archbishop Pachomius (pp. 180-204), Bishop Andrew of Ufa (pp. 321-8), Metropolitan Cyril (pp. 234-53) and Bishop Hierotheus (pp. 130-9).

OVERT, Sergei* He collected memoirs and information on New Martyrs from elderly Russian emigres, especially on the "Theodorovtsy," who wore white crosses and refused to work for the godless authority (see pp. 445-7).

PAWLIUSIK, Matushka Alexandra The wife of Father George, who was in close association with many New Martyrs in the Soviet Union before their escape to the free world during World War II. They contributed their testimony concerning Bishop Onouphry (see pp. 383-403).

POLSKY, Father Michael (†1960) Author of *Russia's New Martyrs*, 3 vols. in Russian. Father Michael was a fearless priest in the Soviet Union, persecuted and exiled to various concentration camps, including Solovki, where he, together with many bishops, signed the famous protest of Solovki clergymen. He knew many rightesus bishops, about which he later compiled his three volumes. Having become convinced that the Sergianist policy would prevail in the Soviet Union, he went south in hope of escaping in order to work for the free Russian Church Outside of Russia. He succeeded in escaping from the red hell in the early '30's by way of Jerusalem, where Metropolitan Anastassy appointed him head priest in London, as a defender of the canonical position of the Russian Church Outside of Russia. After the

Second World War he was a priest in the San Francisco Cathedral under Archbishop Tikhon, where he compiled his martyrology together with his editors, the monks of Jordanville. His third volume contains much material dedicated to "Operation Keelhaul" (the forced repatriation of Russians at the end of World War II); its publication was temporarily suspended in hope of separating the two phases of New Martyrs. The repose of Father Michael in 1960 prevented the publication of this third volume. When the two volumes came out several witnesses of Soviet church conditions criticized his hastiness to categorize all clergy into only two groups, when actually the majority of bishops hoped that Sergianism would not survive, and thus they never officially separated from Metropolitan Sergius. Several people who also suffered for Christ under the communist yoke in Russia thought that Father Michael was too quick to put into the Sergianist category those who hesitated to voice their protest against the Declaration. In addition, many outstanding hierarchs who were definitely against Sergianism Father Michael either dismisses, mentions briefly, or tends to cast a shadow of doubt upon them. Some, such as Bishop Peter of Voronezh, whose letters were preserved and published, is categorized as a Josephite bishop by Father Michael, but there is no evidence of this. We can safely say, as these witnesses assert (Archbishop Andrew, Nun Xenia, Natalia Kieter, Abbess Juliana, Nun Veronica, and Archbishop Leonty), that the Russian clergy as a whole definitely rejected the spirit of Sergianism. It was a small group of Metropolitan Sergius' personal admirers (most notably Alexis and Nikolai) who signed the Declaration and thus formed the nucleus of the present-day Moscow Patriarchate. For this reason the free Russian Church, the Synod of Bishops Outside of Russia, does not have communion with the Moscow Patriarchate, yet remains united in spirit to the believers in the Soviet Union.

REGELSON, Lev (See pp. 491-510)

*ROSTOV** (See Grotoff)

SAMOILOVICH, Mrs.* A resident of Our Lady of Vladimir Convent in San Francisco. She has been a religious woman from her youth in the Poltava region, the setting for many stories of Nikolai Gogol, where she witnessed the closing of a church by the Soviets in St. Matrona's Monastery. It had been announced that on a particular date the church would be destroyed. The doors and windows were boarded up and no services were permitted. One night the entire neighborhood saw a light burning inside the church, as if there were a fire, but since it was strictly forbidden for the citizens to come close, they watched from afar. A miracle occurred that was witnessed by many. Pairs of Saints were seen leaving the church. The people clearly saw Sts. Vladimir and Olga, Boris and Gleb, Anthony and Theodosius, Dimitrius and George and others leave solemnly through the main doors of the church and vanish in the darkness. After hundreds of such pairs of Saints had exited the church, the light went out inside and it was left devoid of sanctity. The next morning when the authorities blew up the church the people knew that the Saints had relinquished their control of this church.

SERAPHIM, (Filimonov) Abbot* of Holy Dormition Skete in Northville, Alberta, Canada. Since he came from an Old Believer family, it took great efforts for him to become an Orthodox monk. This fact, together with the suffering he endured under Soviet atheism and his subsequent imprisonment, gave him the ability to perceive and recognize who the real confessors for Christ were. (See pp. 433-9.)

SERAPHIM (Verbin) Archimandrite (†1962) He entered Glinsk Hermitage at a very young age and there became a monk. He left a whole volume concerning the destruction of the great Glinsk Hermitage as well as bits of information on the persecution of Christians and on the New Martyrs, especially concerning a new saint, Archimandrite Gennady, who perished in Kolyma. (See pp. 395-403)

SHATILOFF, Nun Maria (†1975) of Novo-Diveyevo. A spiritual daughter of New Martyr Andrew of Ufa and a correspondent with Archbishop Theophan of Poltava. She testified as to how Bishop Andrew was mocked by the guards during his imprisonment in Turkestan and in Kirgizia. They would also force him during terrible heat spells to stand in the sun bareheaded in order to evoke sunstroke. In such prison conditions, in one day he lost all his hair. (See pp. 321-8)

SHORETZ, Archpriest Gerasim (*†1968) He emigrated during the Second World War from Lithuania, and then took part in the Church life of the free world and recorded in the free press information about the persecution of believers and the New Martyrs. (See pp. 358-69)

SHUKIN, Father Sergius (*†1978) A priest who recently died in Canada. When he was a young man he traveled to Optina Monastery to get advice from Elder Nektary concerning how he should live a Christian life in an antichristian society. Having concocted elaborate plans in his mind as to how to start secret catacomb lay brotherhoods, he approached the Elder and asked him what he should do. Elder Nektary replied calmly, "Step by step." Father Sergius left humbled, yet he followed the Elder's advice, and after suffering for many years, he was ordained reader by Patriarch Tikhon himself and eventually became a priest, later emigrating to the West. He has provided a fascinating description of the life of the Catacomb Church (in which he describes himself in the third person as "Paul"). He kept abreast of information concerning Orthodoxy in the Soviet Union (see pp. 162-79), and personally interviewed Sergei Kourdakov at which time he discovered that he was an Orthodox Christian (see "The Orthodox Word", no. 59, Nov.-Dec. 1974).

SKLIAROV, Archpriest Alexander and his Matushka Rypsimia* Living witnesses to the destruction of holy places in Belgorod. He was a spiritual son of New Martyr Bishop Nikodim and Father Nicholas Zagorovsky. They are one of the basic sources for Father Michael Polsky's *Russia's New Martyrs.*

STEPANOV, Father Nicholas* (†1964) A witness concerning New Martyrs, especially in the Kuban region. He chose to be a surgeon in the world, because to be a seminarian would have hindered his course in life due to the antireligious nature of the Soviet regime. Because he was a believer, he did not escape persecution and was in various concentration camps, including Solovki, where while functioning as a surgeon he was actually also a secret priest.. His last years he spent teaching in seminary and also testifying about the New Martyrs.

TABITHA, Nun* of Lesna Convent (†1971) She provided information about the destruction of the Raithu Monastery in Kazan and was one of the novices in the women's monastic community established by New Martyr Bishop Andrew. She left biographical data on Bishop Andrew from the time when he was an Archimandrite. (See pp. 321-8)

TIMOFIEVICH, Dr. Anatole P.* (†1976) A physician in Novo-Diveyevo Convent. He was nurtured spiritually in the Kiev-Caves Lavra and was a witness to its terrible destruction. Being a highly talented writer, he left a volume of first-hand accounts of lives of righteous ones and New Martyrs whom he met in his life. These accounts are virtual lives of saints of the 20th century, depicting Holy Russia in its full glory. He visited Sarov and Diveyevo Monasteries just prior to their destruction in 1927, simultaneously with Archbishop Leonty, then a young monk. He had close ties with people in Sarov and Diveyevo, who entrusted him to preserve the miracle-working protrait-icon of St. Seraphim, painted while the saint was still alive. It was through the labors of Dr. Anatole and Archbishop Andrew that this icon safely arrived in America and is now treasured in Novo-Diveyevo Convent.

TKACHEV, Tikhon and Thekla* Living now in Detroit, Michigan. They were spiritual chlidren of Eldress Agatha of Belo-Russia, thanks to whose prayers they were saved and granted freedom to witness about that great saint of our day. (See pp. 417-32)

TOLSTOY, Alexandra Lvovna* The daughter of the great Russian Writer Leo Tolstoy and the foundress of the Tolstoy Foundation in New York. In a letter to Brezhnev in defense of imprisoned writers Sinyavsky and Yuly Daniel, she described how one former soldier on his death bed at the Tolstoy Farm described the following: As a Red Army soldier in his youth he, together with many others, was guarding a building where Lenin was dying. The area was several miles in circumference, a circumstance made necessary because of the horrible shrieks of the dying Lenin. They had to protect the area and were ordered to shoot to kill anyone who would approach the area. These cries of utter despair in death were so mystically horrible that he remembered them the rest of his life with shuddering, being deeply convinced that these shrieks came from a soul that was foretasting infernal torments.

URUSOVA, Natalia Urusova, Princess* (†1964) From her childhood she led a highly spiritual life, something rare for someone of high society at her time. After the

Second World War, having lost all of her six children (three of her sons were martyred for Christ), she wrote her complete biography, which was never fully published. Her book is a highly moving piece of evidence concerning the price Orthodox Christians had to pay to be in the saving enclosure of the True Orthodox Church. Due to her spiritual training she was able to discern quite easily the falseness of the Sergianist position, and in her book she offers a first-hand account of how Metropolitan Sergius personally, without pressure from the authorities, suggested which churches should be closed or blown up, and which clergy should be arrested. Hence, it is not strange that her book has never been published. It is a mother's lamentation over the death of her catacomb children. She has provided information on the following New Martyrs: Metropolitan Joseph (pp. 109-29), Child Sergius and Elder Anatole (pp. 299-302), Priest Vladimir (pp. 334-9), Abbess Antonina (pp. 433-9), Priest Alexander who drew fire from heaven while celebrating the Liturgy on a stump in the midst of a forest, and Archbishop Barlaam (pp. 261-90). In the last days of her life she wrote profound poetry which reflected the hopelessness of Orthodox Christians in the free world, simply because it was apparent to her that they were losing the savor of True Christianity—Orthodoxy. Archbishop Averky, her spiritual father, entrusted her memoirs to the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood for publication, expressing his hope that this book would see light in the English language for the preparation of our neophytes and converts for martyrdom.

VAGIN, Eugene* (See pp. 558-62)

VERONICA, Nun (Kotlarevsky) (†1952) An actress in the world, she was converted to Orthodoxy through the artistic movement of respect to Russia's cultural past at the time of the Revolution. She became closely associated with prominent Orthodox believers, and because of her close association with holy men and women of the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra, she herself was arrested during the Holy Night (see pp. 358-69) and suffered for many years in various prisons in the Sarov-Sanaxar-Temnikoff concentration camps. During the Second World War she escaped to Europe and spent her last years as a nun in Paris, where Helene Kontzevich, having befriended her through their common interest in patristics, persuaded her to write her memoirs of the suffering Russian Church. These memoirs were published by "Russian Life" in 1954 in San Francisco; however, a good portion of them, due to jurisdictional church politics, was lost and only fragments of them were ever separately published, mostly by I.M. Andreyev in the "Vladimirsky Calendar." Unfortunately, her testimony of how Patriarch Alexis had direct responsibility for the outcome of Holy Night, was omitted due to the spirit of Sergianism in the free world. While she was in the Soviet Union she was in a group with Bishops Gregory and Stephen, who did not recognize Metropolitan Sergius officially but refused to separate themselves from his clergy. Only when she arrived in Paris and was confronted with the reality of the Eulogian position did she understand that the Josephites had done the right thing.

SOURCES

VON MECK, Galina* A lay woman of high society. She endured persecution and related her experiences in her book, *As I Remember Them*. Especially moving is the account of the execution of an unknown holy bishop.

WELSH, Alexander Damianovich* (†1968) A professor in Monterey, Ca. He witnessed many atrocities performed in the Kharkov region. For years he worked in a chemical laboratory which the Soviet installed in the closed church of St. Elias in Kharkov. Originally this church was built by a rich Jew who, after experiencing a great miracle that saved his life, built this church out of gratitude. Alexander testified that no matter what kind of gasses the church was exposed to, every morning the chemists would smell the most aromatic fragrance of incense when they arrived, as if angelic services had been performed the whole night long. This miracle was known not only to the workers in the laboratory but to everyone throughout that whole city, and this lasted for years.

XENIA, Nun* of Our Lady of Vladimir Convent in San Francisco. A spiritual daughter of New Martyr Bishop Peter (Zverev) of Voronezh. She witnessed the atrocities performed in Voronezh and, together with her sister, preserved for posterity a whole series of letters decoded by her which Bishop Peter and other Solovki prisoners wrote in cryptic language. In this manner she preserved a whole postic akathist to St. Herman of Solovki, written by Bishop Peter while he suffered at the site where the Saint labored and where the Saint's relics were desecrated. He wrote the akathist on a number of post cards which he interspersed with other information to conceal from atheist officials the real content of his letters. Bishop Peter met his martyr's death there in Golgotha Skete. (See pp. 163-5)

Glossary

Abbot: The spiritual father and superior of a monastery, orginally not in priestly rank.

Acolyte: altar boy

Akathist: A special group of hymns of praise to Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mother of God or a saint, sung standing (the word is derived from the Greek "not sitting").

Altar: Refers to the part of the church behind the Iconostasis where the Consecration and Preparation of the Holy Gifts take place. Often the word altar refers to the Holy Table itself in the middle of this area.

Analogion or *Analoy:* An icon stand or a stand upon which the Book of the Holy Gospels is placed or read.

Antidoron: The loaves remaining from the Proskomedia after the piece which is to become the Body of Christ, together with other particles used for commemorating the living and the dead, have been cut out of them; these loaves are cut up and distributed to the faithful at the end of the Liturgy; the word means "instead of the Gifts."

Antimins: A cloth representing the Saviour's shroud in which His Body was lain. This cloth contains a piece of relic and upon this the Divine Liturgy is celebrated.

Apodosis: Giving-away or leave-taking. The final day of a feast or a festal period.

Apostolic Succession: The continuity of the "laying on of hands" from Christ Himself through the Apostles to the bishops of later centuries so that the bishops of the Orthodox Church today are ordained in an unbroken succession from the Apostles.

Archdeacon: The main deacen in a cathedral or one who assists a bishop.

Archbishop: A high ranking bishop who rules over an important diocese or more than one diocese.

GLOSSARY

Archimandrite: A hieromonk who, theoretically, is in charge of one or more monasteries; or an abbot in priestly rank; in practice in recent times it is often no more than a title of honor for a hieromonk.

Athos: (Mount Athos): A rocky peninsula in northern Greece comprising 20 monasteries and hundreds of sketes and other monastic communities. The Church in Russia had close spiritual ties to this bastion of the Orthodox Faith where many thousands of Russian monks dwelt before the Revolution.

Bear Mountain: A concentration camp near Petrozavodsk, in north European Russia.

Bolshevik: A member of a political party which arose before the Russian Revolution and later became the Communist Party.

Canon: A set of hymns and verses sung to a particular saint or in honor of a feast. A rule or decree of an historic Church council.

Canonization: (see Glorification)

Catacomb Church: The Church comprised of those bishops and their flocks who were forced underground by the persecution of the Soviet Government and the church politics of Metropolitan Sergius, beginning in 1927.

Chalice: A liturgical vessel used to contain the wine which is transformed into the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit during the Divine Liturgy.

Cheka: (see GPU)

Chotki: (see Prayer Rope)

Chrismation: The Sacrament of the sealing with holy oil (Chrism) giving the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who are baptized.

Consecration: The transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit during the Divine Liturgy. The Sacrament of the laying on of hands on a priest by bishops who elevate him to the rank of bishop.

Diaspora: A body of believers dispersed outside their native land; often used to refer to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

Diocese: An area comprised of parish churches, missions, and monastic dwellings under a bishop who rules it.

Diskos: The liturgical plate used to hold the bread, called the Lamb, which is to become the Body of Christ during the Liturgy; particles used to commemorate the living and the dead are also placed upon it.

Divine Liturgy: A divine service of the Orthodox Church in which bread and wine are consecrated to become the Body and Blood of Christ, and at which the faithful partake of these Holy Gifts.

Doxology: Praise of God. A hymn sung or read during Matins praising the Holy Trinity.

Ecumenical: Universal.

Ecumenical Council: One of the seven great universal councils of the Church in which the teachings and dogmas of the Church were set forth and various heresies were condemned.

Elder: A spiritual father and guide to a large number of monastics and believers, renowned for being filled with the Grace of the Holy Spirit. He need not be a priest.

Epitrachelion: A vestment which hangs from the neck of the priest and is the one indispensable vestment for all priestly ministrations.

Ezhov Purge: (see Yezhov Purge)

GPU: The Soviet Secret Police known during different periods as the NKVD, Cheka, MVD, and currently, as the KGB.

Glinsk: A major monastery in central Russia where many holy monks lived in the 19th and at the beginning of this century, in direct continuity from the disciples of Elder Paisius Velichkovsky.

Glorification: The formal proclamation by the bishops of a local Orthodox Church that a certain righteous man or woman is a saint and is to be venerated and honored as a heavenly intercessor.

Great Entrance: A moment in the Divine Liturgy that symbolizes Christ offering Himself up for the world. The priest enters the altar through the Holy Doors at this time with the Holy Gifts.

Great Lent: The great forty-day fast which precedes Pascha (Easter).

Hegumen or *Igumen:* (see abbot).

Heresy: A different or wrong teaching about Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church in opposition to divinely-revealed truth.

Hermitage: A monastic community in a wilderness area of smaller size, often characterized by austere asceticism; it is frequently a dependency of a larger monastery.

Hesychasm: The "quiet" life of those cut off from the world who devote themselves entirely to God by means of the Jesus Prayer with a heart which burns with love for God.

GLOSSARY

Hierarch: A bishop, archbishop, Metropolitan or Patriarch.

Hierodeacon: A deacon who is also a monk.

Hieromartyr: A martyr of priestly rank.

Hieromonk: A monk who is also a priest.

Holy Communion: The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which the faithful who have prayed, fasted and confessed their sins receive at the Divine Liturgy.

Holy Gifts: The bread and wine which are offered to God by the faithful at the Divine Liturgy which are to be placed on the altar and consecrated

Holy Night: The famous night in 1932 when thousands of clergy and believers were arrested in Petersburg.

Icon: A holy image of Our Lord Jesus Christ, a feast or a particular saint painted in traditional manner and style.

Iconostasis: A partition between the altar and the main portion of the church upon which holy icons are placed in a specific manner.

Industrialization: The accelerated efforts of the Communist government beginning in the 1920's to make "backward" Russia an "advanced" industrial nation like America and the countries of Western Europe.

Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." This prayer expresses the true relationship of man to God. It is said by many Orthodox Christians, and especially monastics, who repeat the prayer from the depth of their soul aflame with love for God.

Josephites or *Josephite Church:* Those bishops and their flocks who refused to cooperate with the policy of Metropolitan Sergius as set forth in his "Declaration of 1927".

Karlovtsy: Refers to the Russian Church Abroad because of the fact that the first Council of bishops outside of Russia after the Revolution met in Karlovets in Serbia.

Kathisma: A section of psalms (20 in number) read from the Psalter during the Divine services when the congregation sits (from the Greek word for "to sit").

Klobuk: Head-covering worn by monastics.

Komsomol: Young Communist League

Kulichi: Sweet traditional Russian Pascha breads

Lavra: A large monastery often comprised of many monasteries, sketes and caves. In Russia there were four such lavras: the Kiev-Caves Lavra, the Pochaev Lavra, the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra, and the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra.

Little Entrance: At this moment in the Divine Liturgy the priest or bishop enters into the altar through the Royal Doors with the Gospel Book. Shortly after this the Epistle and Gospel are read.

Liturgizing: Celebrating the Divine Liturgy.

Liturgy: (see Divine Liturgy)

Living Church: A sect formed in the 1920's in Russia, under Communist influence, of "liberal" Orthodox believers who wished to "modernize" the Church in a Protestant direction. The Communist government gave it many large church buildings in return for cooperating with the Soviet regime. In the twenties it was recognized by the Patriarch of Constantinople as the official Russian Church.

Local Church: A self-governing group of dioceses headed by an archbishop, Metropolitan or Patriarch. For example: the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Orthodox Church in Greece, and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

Locum Tenens: A bishop who in the absence of a Patriarch guards his throne. Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, and Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich were appointed Locum Tenens by Patriarch Tikhon before his arrest (See p. 114 above).

Mantia: Mantle; the pleated outer robe worn by monastics who have been tonsured.

Matins: One of the daily services which takes place late at night or early in the morning. This service is comprised chiefly of psalms and a canon of hymns to the saint who is commemorated on that particular day

Medvezhdaya Gora: (see Bear Mountain)

Metochion: A dependency of a monastery usually near or in a large city for the economic needs of a monastery.

Metropolitan: A bishop who rules over many dioceses, bishops, and archbishops, often being the head of a Local Church.

Modernist: (see Renovationist) One who seeks to make Christianity "up-to-date" or "modern" in accordance with the fashions prevailing in the intellectual world.

Moleben: A prayer service in which the faithful ask for heavenly help or give thanks to God.

Monastic Habit: The dress of a monastic consisting of robes, mantia, and klobuk.

Moscow Patriarchate: The official church body recognized by the Soviet government, dating from the "Declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927; it is forced to obey all demands put upon it by the Soviet authorities, including the closing of churches and monasteries and the open denial of the persecution of believers.

Mount Athos: (see Athos)

NKVD: (see GPU)

Name-worshippers: Doers of the Jesus Prayer who, in their simplicity, mistakenly thought that the very name of Jesus itself was divine. The movement began on Mt. Athos among Russian monks just before the Revolution and continued after the Revolution in the Caucasus.

Obdorsk: A wilderness area near the mouth of the Oba river in the far north on the Artic Sea, where many, including a number of Orthodox hierarchs, were exiled without hope of return.

Oblation Table: (see Table of Preparation)

Old Believers: A sect which originated during the time of Patriarch Nikon in the 17th century. It is characterized by a narrow-minded preoccupation with the external customs and traditions of the Orthodox Church.

Omophorion: A stole worn by bishops during the Divine Services.

Optina: An outstanding monastery in Central Russia where a famous hermitage was located in which dwelt a long chain of Spirit-filled elders known throughout the empire for giving spiritual counsel.

Ordination: The setting apart for liturgical service of priests and deacons.

Panagia: An oval medalion or icon of the Mother of God which a bishop wears on a chain around his neck signifying his rank.

Panikhida: A service of prayer for those who have reposed.

Pascha: The feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ ("Easter").

Patriarch: The title given to a bishop who is the head of a large Local Church called a Patriarchate.

Petrograd: The Russian name for Petersburg, called Leningrad by the Soviet government.

Phelonion: The large stiff vestment worn by a priest at certain times in the Divine Services.

Plaschanitsa: Icon of our Lord Jesus Christ lying in the tomb, representing His Shroud, placed on a large representation of a coffin in the center of the church on Holy and Great Saturday.

Podvig: The Russian word for an ascetic feat, spiritual labor or simply Christian struggle.

Prayer Rope or *Chotki:* A knotted rope commonly used by monastics and many Orthodox Christians in saying the Jesus Prayer.

Prelest: Spiritual delusion

Proskomedia: The service of "preparation" for the Divine Liturgy. During it, the "lamb" that is to become the Body of Christ during the Liturgy is cut out of a prosphora, and the living and dead are commemorated.

Prosphora: A small round loaf of bread especially prepared for the Divine Liturgy.

Protopresbyter: A married priest who has received official recognition of his service in the Church and is in most cases the pastor of a large parish or cathedral.

Rasaphore Monk: A novice who wears an outer monastic robe (ryassa or rasson) but has yet to be tonsured a monk or nun.

Relics: Pieces of the bones or objects associated with a particular saint which are venerated by the faithful.

Renovationist: A person who follows the ideas of the Living Church in Russia.

Royal Doors: The central doors that lead into the altar through which the priest or bishop enters at certain points in the Divine Services.

Schema-monk: A monk who leads a life of seclusion and interior prayer.

Sergianism: The doctrine or practice of cooperating with the policies of the Soviet government in its attempt to establish Communism and atheism in Russia. This doctrine was first expressed in the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927.

Shroud: The cloth in which Christ was buried.

Skete: A monastic family of just a few monks; the middle or "Royal Path" between coenobitic and anchoritic monasticism.

Skufia: A cap worn by monks outside of church.

Solovki: A monastery in the Solovetsk Islands in the White Sea which was turned into a concentration camp in the twenties. This was the site of the martyrdom of numberless Church hierarchs and faithful.

Starets: (see Elder)

Synod: A group of bishops gathered together in council. This term is often used to refer to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

Table of Preparation: A side table in the altar where the Proskomedia is performed.

Temnikov: A concentration camp near the Sarov and Sanaxar Monasteries. Its authorities were responsible for destroying the holy shrines in and around Sarov and Diveyevo. Buchenwald, Dachau and Auschwitz took this and other Soviet concentration camps as their ideal and model.

Tonsure: The rite whereby a novice is clothed into the monastic habit and becomes a monk or nun.

Tropar or *Troparion:* A hymn used in the Divine Services composed in honor of a particular saint or feast.

True Orthodox Christians: (see Catacomb Church)

Typicon: The order of Divine Services. Also, the rules and ordinances of a particular monastery.

Ukaze: A declaration made by a ruling bishop or a council of bishops.

Uniats: Roman Catholics who use the outward rites of the Orthodox Church while remaining “united“ to the Pope of Rome.

Valaam: An enormous monastery on Lake Ladoga on the Russo-Finnish border which existed even before the Baptism of Russia (988); there thousands of righteous monks worked out their salvation. After twenty years of sorrow caused by Bolshevik persecution and the reforms of modernist bishops, the monastery and its sketes were destroyed in the ‘40‘s.

Vespers: A church service sung in the late afternoon, consisting of psalms, hymns and verses composed in honor of the saint or feast commemorated on a particular day.

Vicar: A bishop in submission to the ruling bishop of a diocese and who helps him in its governance.

Vigil: A service sung on the eve of a special feast; it is composed of Vespers and Matins.

GLOSSARY

Vladika: A Russian word with an affectionate connotation, used to address an Orthodox bishop; literally, "master."

Yezhov Purge: A merciless persecution of the Church and clergy instituted by the chief of the secret police, Yezhov, in the mid-1930's; it produced the near liquidation of the visible Church by 1940.

Zyransk: An area in north-eastern Siberia with an extremely harsh climate, where the Soviet authorities sent many Christians into exile.

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Index

Abercius, Archbishop of Zhitomir NM 99, 180-204
Adrian and Natalia, Sts. 410-6
Address of Barlaam, Archbishop, preceeding his consecration 267-70
  of Metropolitan Joseph preceeding his consecration 111-3
Agatha, Eldress of Belo-Russia NM 417-32, *419 ill.*
Agathangel, Metropolitan of Yaroslav NM 62, 99, 115, 125, 135, 150-2, 158, 161, 191, 239, 244, 274, 499, 501, *138 ill.*
Alaska 151, 302, *154 ill.*
Alexander, Priest, Medvedsky NM 367
Alexander Jacobson NM 69-77, *71 ill.*
Alexander, Priest NM 275
Alexeev, S.A.(C.A.) NM 96, 99, 101
Alexei Ikonnikoff NM 333
Alexia, Abbess of Chile 601
Alexis, Bishop of Serpukhov (Gotovtsev) NM 498
Alexis, Bishop of Voronezh (Bui) NM 162-79, 247, 497-8, 502-5, *163 ill.*
Alexis, Metropolitan of Vilna NM 398
Alexis, Patriarch (Simansky) 19-20, 101, 367, 456, 469-71, 477-9, 483-5, 517-19, 527, 536-7, 566
Alexis the Hermit, Elder of Zosima Hermitage 405-8, 414
Ambrose, Elder of Optina 78, 265, 294, 351
Amphilochius, Bishop of Enisei (Skvortsov) NM 505
Anastasia Andreyevna, Fool for Christ's Sake NM 437
Anastassy, Metropolitan 49
Anatole, Archbishop of Irkutsk NM 184
Anatole, Elder of Optina (Potapov) the Younger NM 206, 293-303, 348, 351, 377, *295 ill.*
Anatole, Elder of Optina (Zertsalov) the Elder 310
Anatole, Metropolitan of Odessa (Grisiuk) NM 398
Andreev, Archpriest Theodore K., Prof. NM 27-32, 92, 96
Andrew, Archbishop of Novo-Diveyevo 296, 310, *296 ill.*
Andrew, Bishop of Ufa (Uktomsky) NM 321-8, *323-4 ill.*
Andrew of Caesarea, St. 222
Andreyev, I.M. 15-103, 344, *22 ill.*
Anthony, Archbishop of Mariupol 63-4
Anthony, Bishop (Romanovsky) NM 399
Anthony, Metropolitan (Krapovitsky) 57, 180, 183, 210, 252, 264-5, 321, 325, 377, 589, *252 ill.*
Anthony, Schema-Bishop of Kiev Caves Lavra 319
Antichrist 47, 50-1, 80-1, 100, 122, 215, 222-3, 401, 422, 495, 525, 534, 540, 542, 559, 566, 573-4
Antonina, Abbess NM 433-9, *435 ill.*
Anzersk 79
Apologetics, Orthodox Christian, 36
Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius (see Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius)
Aranovich, Father Sergius 136
Arcardius, Bishop NM 312-20, *313 ill.*
Arcadius of Vyazma, St. 319

INDEX

Arsenius, Archimandrite NM 117-20, 362, 438
Arsenius, Bishop of Serpukhov 135
Arsenius, Metropolitan of Novgorod (Stradnitsky) NM 99, 135, 150, 252, 321, 570, *252 ill.*
Arzamas 272
Askoldov, Prof. S.A. 25-30,32
Athanasius, Archbishop (Sakharov) 238, 402, 507
Athanasius, Archbishop of Kiev NM 135
Athanasius, Bishop (Malinin) 503
Athanasius, Bishop of Skvirsk (Molchanovsky) 502
Athanasius the Great, St. 150, 573
Atheist Dictionary 46, 127, 562-3
Augustine, Blessed 210, 225
Avercius, Archbishop (see Abercius)
Averky, Archbishop of Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville 33, 602

Baltic-White Sea Canal Camps 151, 186, 401-2, 455
Barlaam, Archbishop (Riashentsev) NM 125, 158, 261-90, 498-502, *261 ill.*
Barlaam of India, St. 289-90
Barnabas, cell-attendant of Elder Anatole NM 298-303
Barnabas, Elder of Gethsamane Skete 351, 404-5
Barsanuphius, Bishop (Luzin) NM 399
Barsanuphius, Elder of Optina 307
Basil, Bishop of Kargopol (Doktorov) 502
Bear Mountain 275, 287, 401
Benjamin, Hieromonk (Essen) NM 366
Benjamin, Metropolitan of Petrograd NM 86-8, 98, 536
Berdyaev, Nicholas 92
Bergson 25-30, 37
Bezsonov, V.A. 583
Bityugov, Father Seraphim 506
Bogatyrev, Mina 559
Boris NM 334-9
Brotherhood of St. Nicholas 315-20
Bucol, Hierodeacon 363
Buevtsy 196-71
Buiites (see Buevtsy)
Bulgakov, Father Sergius 92, 536
Butyrka Prison 211-3, 318, 327

Caucasus Mountains 206, 433-41
Cedrik, Priest Nicholas NM 210
Chernov, Alexander Andreevich 522-7
Chetverukhin, Matushka Eugenia and Priest Elias NM 404-16
Church of Christ the Saviour 123, 138, *192 ill.*
Constantine, Archimandrite of Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville 33 592
Cyril, Metropolitan of Kazan NM 62, 99, 135, 147, 187, 215-6, 223, 234-53, 499, 501-8, *234, 251-2 ill.*
Cyril, Ataev NM 331-7

Damascene, Bishop of Glukhov (Tsedrik) NM 99, 141, 187, 210-33, 241-2, 352-3, 499, 501-8, *233 ill.*
Daniel, Yuly 123, 129, 454
Declaration of the laity of Serpukhov to Metropolitan Sergius 58-9
  of Metropolitan Sergius (July 16/29) 15-20, 32, 45-8, 58, 62-3, 91, 96-8, 103, 109, 114-5, 135, 142-9, 156-60, 166, 186-9, 197, 208-9, 216-23, 326, 345-8, 352-7, 461-9, 492-6, 515-8, 527-8, 533, 563-4

INDEX

Diary of a Monk 86, 110, 120
Dimitry, Archbishop of Gdov (Lyubimov) NM 58-9, 88-103, 116, 125, 135, 208, 247, 495-503, *89-90 ill.*
Dimitry, Archimandrite of Voronezh NM 65, 166
Dimitry, Priest Ivanov NM 352-7, *356 ill*
Diveyevo Convent 30-1, 272, 599
Doctrine of Salvation 140, 195
Document of Separation of Dimitry, Archbishop of Gdov 101-3
  of Hierotheus, Bishop of Nikolsk 134-9
  of Valentine Sventitsky, Archpriest 208-9
Dositheus, Elder of Optina NM 30
Dostoevsky, Fyodor 27, 133, 293
Dubina, A.S. 559
Dudko, Father Dimitry 37, 487-90, 554-5, 574

Elias, Priest and Matushka Eugenia Chetverukhin NM 404-16
Epistle of Alexis Bishop of Voronezh 171-2
  of Pachomius, Archbishop of Chernigev and Archbishop Abercius 188-98
  of Seraphim, Archbishop of Uglich 158-61
  of the Yaroslav Bishops 273-4
Epistles of Cyril, Metropolitan of Kazan 242-57
  of Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd 124-9
  of Victor, Bishop of Glazov 141-50
Ermogen, Archbp. (see Hermogenes)
Ershov, M.V. (see Michael, Hieromonk)
Eshliman, Father Nicholas 19, 473-7, 531
Ezhov Purge 231, 241, 288, 320, 344, 402, 457
Eugene, Bishop of Rostov (Kobranov) 125, 158, 274, 498, 500
Eugene, Schema-Hieromonk NM 424, 430-1
Florensky, Father Paul 27-9, 32
Fudel, S.I. 207-8

Gabriel, Bishop 96
Gabriel, Schema-Archimandrite of Eleazar 265, 271
Gennady, Archimandrite (Sekach) 20, 549
George, Priest, Snesarev NM 165
Gerasimus, Elder of Kaluga 351
Germogen, Archbp. (see Hermogenes)
Glinsk Hermitage 182, 526, 570-74
Gogel, Nikolai 297
Golubev, Archpriest John 136
Gregorians 135, 143, 209, 502, 515
Gregory, Archbishop of Ekaterinburg 135
Gregory, Bishop 125
Gregory the Cross-Bearer NM 445-7
Gregory the Theologian, St. 574-5
Grotoff, Prof. S.V. 77
Gulag Archipelago 87
Gurias, Bishop NM 237
Gury, Archimandrite (Yegerov) 157

Herman, Bishop (Riashentsev) NM 261-290, 404, *262 ill.*
Herman of Alaska, St. 151, 302
Hermogenes, Archbishop 20, 192, 459, 473, 490, *191 ill.*
Hermogenes of Moscow, St. 418, 465
Hierotheus, Bishop of Nikolsk (Afonik) NM 130-9, 500, *131-2 ill.*
Hilarion (see Ilarion)
Hippolytus, St. 222
Holy Night 358-68, 379

INDEX

Ignatius, Bishop (Brianchaninov) 30, 302, 308
Ignaty, Elder of Harbin 123
Ikonikoff, Seargent Alexei NM 333
Ilarion, Archbishop (Troitsky) NM 62, 239, 501
Ilarion, Bishop (Belsky) NM 18, 62, 66, 499, 502
In the Father's Embrace 86. 110-1, 120
Innocent, Bishop of Vladimir 507
"Interview with Metropolitan Sergius" 96-101
Ioasaph, Bishop (Zhevakov) 62
Ioasaph, Prince of India, St. 289-90
Irinarch, Bishop of Great Ustiug NM 135-6
Ismael, Priest, Rozhdestvensky NM 32, 340-7, *341 ill.*
Isaac, Abbot of Optina 299
Isaac the Syrian, St. 186, 204, 297
Ivanov, Priest Dimitry (see Dimitry, Priest)

John, Archbishop of Latvia (Pommer) NM 93, 578-95, *579-80 ill.*
John, Archbishop Of San Francisco (Manimovitch) 371, 596, 601-2
John, Archpriest, Andreevsky NM 166
John, Archpriest, Steblin-Kamensky NM 166
John, Bishop of Kirov 473-5
John Chrysostom, St. 72, 150, 285, 411, 515, 522
John Climacus, St. 206, 269
John of Damascus, St. 272
John of Kronstadt, St. 30, 39, 235, 322, 347, 351, 601
Jordanville, Holy Trinity Monastery 31-4, 182-3, 270, 544
Joseph, Bishop (Orekhov) NM 399
Joseph, Bishop of Birsk 502
Joseph, Elder of Optina 309
Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd NM 17-8, 58, 62, 85-8, 91, 96-100, 109-129, 135, 139-41, 150, 158, 172, 244-47, 253, 318, 348, 433, 464, 487, 493-503, 524, 536, 564-5, 570, 578, *107-8 ill.*
Josephites 17-21, 32, 62, 86, 92, 116-21, 169, 340-3, 433, 460-1, 495-509, 523, 548. 568
"Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate" 506, 567-8

Kamenskikh, Nikodim N. 479-83
Kedrov, Priest Nicholas NM 201-2
Khomiakov, Alexis S. 23
Kieter, Natalia 366-8
Kiev-Caves Lavra 30, 192, 210, 238, 319, 348-57, 599
Kireyevsky, Ivan 23, 293
Kiselev, Alexei 545
Kitezh 101
Kolyma Death Camps 272, 383, 398-403
Kontzevitch, Helene 371-82, *376 ill.*
Kontzevitch, Prof. I.M. 33, 371-4
Krasnitsky 238
Krasov, Archpriest Michael 186

Lagov, Priest Peter NM 413-6
Lavra of St. Alexander Nevsky 125, 267, 302, 367
  of Kiev-Caves 30, 192, 210, 238, 319
Lenin, V. 599
Leonty, Archbishop of Santiago 183-5, 191, 203-4, 502-9, *191, 597-8 ill.*
Leontiev, Konstantine 23, 67, 293
Letters of Barlaam, Archbishop 277-81
  of Herman, Bishop 282-8
  of Nikon, Hieromartyr of Optina 205-9

INDEX

Levitin-Krasnov, Anatoly 20, 367-8, 458, 460, 541-4, 557
Living Church 58, 113-4, 127, 135, 142-3 241, 352, 378, 389-91, 425, 515, 536, 563
Lopeshanskaya, E. 187, 199, 241
Lossky, Prof. N.O. 29-30
Lydia NM 326, 329-33, *331 ill.*

Macarius, Desert-Dweller of the Caucasus Mountains NM 440-1
Macarius, Elder of Optina 277, 299
Macarius, Schema-Bishop NM 358-69, *369 ill.*
Macarius the Roman, St. 358-69
Magadan Death Camps 358, 399-402
Mai Guba Death Camp 140, 156, 180, 186-7, 201
Makushinsky, Alexei and Zinaida 340-7
Maria of Gatchina, Matushka NM 85-7
Masich, Father Nicholas 376, 445-7, *376 ill.*
Maxim, Bishop of Serpukhov (Zhizhilenko) NM 16-18, 48, 52-68, 78, 140, 502, *53 ill.*
Maximus the Confessor, St. 52, 67, 99, 150
Mechev, Father Sergei 506
Medvedsky, Priest Alexander NM 367
Methodius, Hieromonk NM 439
Micah, Bishop of Archangelsk 363
Michael, Archbishop of Minsk 582
Michael, Bishop (TOC) 545
Michael, Hieromonk (Vasielich Ershov) 560
Michael, Metropolitan (Ermakov) 494
Michael, (Misha) Fool for Christ's Sake NM 359-60
Michael, Priest (Rozhdestvensky) NM 32, 340-7, *342 ill.*
Michael the Blessed of Chernigov, Fool for Christ's Sake NM 183-4
Mitrofan, Archimandrite of San Francisco 173
Mitrofan, Archpriest NM 174
Mitrofan of Voronezh, St. 162-3
Moral Theology 38
Mother of God 74-77, 152, 343, 364-5, 373, 410, 418
Mount Athos 271, 362, 439, 550

Name-Worshippers 362-3, 439
Natalia and Adrian, Sts. 410-16
Nektary, Bishop of Seattle 305, 387-9, 601
Nektary, Bishop of Yaransk (Trezvinsky) NM 18, 63-6, 499, 502
Nektary, Elder of Optina NM 30, 293, 298, 309-10, 389-90, 601, *296 ill.*
Nektary, Hieromonk (Ivanov) NM 165
Nestorov, Prof. S. 91, 186
New Athos 440, 550
New Bircha 156
Nicander, Father NM 360
Nicholas, Archpriest, Piskanovsky NM 65, 166
Nicholas, Metropolitan of Krutitsa (Yarashevich) 494, 519
Nicholas, Priest, Kedrov NM 202
Nicholas, Priest, Prozorov NM 88, 91-6
Nicholas, Priest Tsedrik NM 210
Nicholas, Priest, Zagorovsky NM 92, 370-82, *370, 375-6 ill.*
Nicholas the Wonderworker, St. 93, 602
  Brotherhood of 315-20
Nicholas the II, Tsar-Martyr NM 121-2, 429, 599, 602-3

INDEX

Nikodim, Metropolitan of Leningrad 450, 457, 473, 476-84, 534, 568
Nikon, Hieromonk of Optina NM 296, 304-9, *296 ill.*
Nilus, Sergei 235, 299, *356 ill.*
Novaselovy, Prof. M.A. 96

Obdorsk 447, 493
On the Banks of God's River 299
Onouphry, Bishop NM 383-403, *383-4 ill.*
Open Letter of Kirov Believers to Patriarch Alexis 474-85
Optina Monastery 30, 78, 99, 162, 199 206, 265, 277, 293-311, 348, 352, 377, 389-90, 485, 551
Orthodox Teaching on Salvation 140, 195
Osipov, Vladimir 545

Pachomius, Archbishop of Chernigov NM 99, 151, 180-204, 211, 365, *181-2 ill.*
Pamphilus the Priest-Martyr, St. 413
Panteleimon, Archimandrite of Optina NM 293
Paramon NM 429-30
Partheny, Archbishop (Levitsky) 309
Partheny, Bishop (Brianskikh) NM 398, 490, 599
Partheny, Elder of the Kiev Caves 238
Paul, Bishop of Yalta (Kratirov) NM 500-2
Peter, Archbishop (Zverev) NM 105, 165, 173-7
Peter, Metropolitan of Krutitska NM 18, 59, 62, 88, 98-103, 114-9, 124-5, 135-6, 139, 147, 155, 161, 172, 194, 209, 223-5, 241-2, 252-7, 274, 353, 398, 493-5, 503-9, 564-7, 570, *252 ill*
Peter, Priest, Lagov NM 413-16
Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow 129, 308
Philaret, Metropolitan of New York 554 561, 563, 574
Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow, St. 150, 172
Philippenko, Archpriest Alexander NM 65, 166
Platon, Archbishop of Revel NM 585
Platon, Bishop of Bogorodsk (Ridnev) NM 497
Pobedonostsev, Konstantine 362
Poloi 212-16
Polsky, Archpriest Michael 18, 240, 492, 506, 600, 605
Pomazansky, Archpriest Michael 33
Porphyrius, Elder of Glinsk Hermitage 523
Prozorov, Priest Nicholas NM 88, 91-6
Pskov Caves Monastery 365, 368-9, *368-9 ill.*

Regelson, Lev 20-1, 158, 208, 491-510, 513, 605
Renovationism 58, 158, 167, 203, 248-9, 258, 360, 417, 425, 501, 515, 544, 564
Rostov, Alexei 91, 103, 180
Russian Church Outside of Russia (Church Abroad) 50, 56-7, 253, 258, 289, 346, 464, 489-90, 555, 561, 566-73, 601-3
Rymarenko, Father Adrian (see Andrew, Archbishop)

Sarov Monastery 30, 162, 272, 318, 357, 599
Savva, Bishop of Edmonton 601

Seraphim, Archbishop of Dimitriov (Zvezdinsky) NM 135, 506
Seraphim, Archbishop of Uglich (Samoilovich) NM 62, 99, 125, 135, 151-61, 172, 187, 225, 244, 274, 498-502, 571, *153-4 ill.*
Seraphim, Bishop of the Catacomb Church 550-1 (see also 299-302)
Seraphim, Bishop of Kolpinsk 363
Seraphim, Elder (child Sergius) 299-302, 551
Seraphim, Hieromonk (see Zagarovsky)
Seraphim, Metropolitan (Chichagov) 217, 503
Seraphim, Schema-Hieromonk NM 130-4
Seraphim of Sarov, St. 31-2, 299, 381, 406, 413-6, 457
Sergianism 17-21, 45, 62, 74, 87, 116-7, 121, 124 141, 247-8, 257-8, 326, 345, 368, 452, 457-9, 461-90, 506, 523, 542-3, 573, 605
Sergius, Bishop (Nikolsky) 502
Sergius, Bishop of Narva (Druzhinin) NM 96, 496-7, 505
Sergius, Metropolitan (Staragorodsky) (see Declaration of Sergianism) (see Sergianism)
Sergius of Radonezh, St. 203, 413-4, 465
Sermon of Archbishop Barlaam 266-7
Shamordino Nuns 78-84
Shoretz, Archpriest Gerasim 365
Shukin, Archpriest Sergei 167
Sinesius, Bishop of Izhevsk (Zarubin) 505-6
Sixty Priest Martyrs NM 442-4
Soloviev, Vladimir 30, 38, 215, 226, 293
Solovki Concentration Camp 18, 31, 48, 54-66, 69-81, 99, 101, 140, 158, 165-6, 186, 190, 201, 228-9, 239, 272, 275, 287, 318-9, 357, 379, 381, 401, 447, 493, 501-8, 564
Solzhenitsyn, Alexander I. 20, 87, 544-7
Sophia, Abbess of Kiev NM 233, 348-57, *233, 349-50, 355-6 ill.*
Sophronius, Bishop 136
Steblin-Kamensky, Archpriest John NM 166
Stephen, Bishop NM 96
Stephen, Proto-Martyr and Archdeacon, St. 120-1
Sventitsky (see Valentin, Archpriest)
Svir Concentration Camp 18
Symeon, Archimandrite of Eleazar NM 265

Taganka Prison 16, 55, 59-60, 78, 237
Talantov, Boris 19-20, 45, 116-7, 453-489, 490, 523, 525
Talberg, Prof. Nicholas 33
Tavrion, Archimandrite of Glinsk Hermitage 572-4
Temnikoff Concentration Camp 400, 445-7, 454
Testament of Patriarch Tikhon 57, 255, 256
Theodore, Archbishop (Pozdeyev) NM 185, 203, 237
Theodore the Studite, St. 150
Theodosius, Archimandrite of Kiev-Caves Lavra NM *191 ill.*
Theodosius, Metropolitan of the Catacomb Church 544, 589
Theodosius of Chernigov, St. 182-5, 425, *182 ill.*
Theoktista Michailovna, Fool for Christ's Sake NM 162, 164, 173-9, *164 ill.*
Theophan the Recluse, Bishop 30, 32, 205, 309, 494
Theophania, Abbess 433-4
Tikhomirov, Father Sergei 30, 32

INDEX

Tikhon, Patriarch NM 16-7, 47, 56-7, 113, 121-2, 130, 133, 137, 151-2, 210-3, 223, 230, 235, 241-2, 252-7, 316, 327, 391, 405, 487, 536, 549, 553, 559, 561, 563-4, 570, 586, *137, 252 ill.*
Tikhon of Zadonsk, St. 162, 297
Tikhonites 17, 19, 46, 121, 137, 167, 233, 487, 546, 548, 562, 569
Tkachev, Tikhon and Thekla 417-32
Tolstoy, Leo 75, 293
Tolstoites 75
Troubetskoy, Father Nicholas 275
True Christianity 297
Tryphon of Vyatka, St. 75-6
Tsedrik, Priest Nicholas NM 210
Turgenev, Ivan 293
Turukhan 241-3

Ukhto-Pechersk 167-8
Urusova, Natalia V. 117-20, 275, 300-2, 334-9, 433, 439

Vagin, Eugene A. 558-562
Valaam Monastery 30, 133, 302, 523
Valentina the Young Student NM 326
Valentine, Priest, Sventitsky NM 205-9, 497
Varlaam, Archbishop (see Barlaam)
Veronica, Nun 358-61
Veryuzhsky, Archpriest 495-6
Victor, Bishop of Glazov NM 18, 63-71, 135, 140-50, 244, 495-502
Victorin, Archpriest Dobronravov NM 96, 99, 101
Vincent, Monk of Optina NM 309-11
Vitaly, Archbishop of Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville 33-4, 182-3, 270
Vladimir, Metropolitan of Kiev NM 177, 536-61
Vladimir, the Young Priest NM 334-9
Vladimir, Priest, Zagarsky NM 200
Vlassy, Schema-Hieromonk of the Catacomb Church 556
Vorkuta, Miracle of 82-4
Voronezh, New Martyrs of 165-6
Vsevolod, Elder 501-2
Vyatka 75-6, 140, 157, 167, 180, 199, 244, 458, 477, 495, 499

White Sea Canal Death Camps 151, 186, 401-2, 455

Xenophont, Archimandrite of Optina 311

Yakunin, Father Gleb 19, 473, 477, 490, 531
"Yaroslav Uprising" 152
Yezhov Purge (see Ezhov)

Zacharius, Bishop 257
Zagarsky, Priest Vladimir NM 201
Zagarovsky, Priest Nicholas NM 370-92, *370, 375-6 ill.*
Zhizhilenko, Dr. (see Maxim, Bishop).
Zosima Hermitage 405-7
Zyryani or Zyryansk 151, 197, 238